

# THE LORD MY LIGHT



JOSEPH RICKABY, S.J.









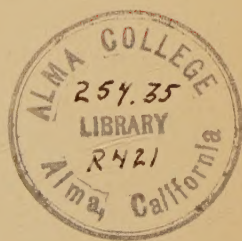
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## P R E F A C E

SINCE 1897 it has been customary at Oxford and Cambridge for the Catholic Undergraduates to assemble on Sunday mornings in an Oratory, where Mass is said and half-an-hour's Conference is addressed to them. It has frequently been my duty to give these Conferences. Some I have published in two volumes :

(A) Oxford and Cambridge Conferences, 1897—1899, pp. 413 (Burns and Oates).

(B) Oxford and Cambridge Conferences, Second Series, 1900—1901, pp. 244 (Sands and Co.).

(B) is out of print, a few copies of (A) are still on sale. This is a Selection from them both, with many omissions and emendations, calculated to give the Conferences a wider interest. They are not difficult reading: still they are addressed rather to the better than to the less well educated. They aim at removing current prejudices and misconceptions concerning the Catholic Church, and at instructing the layman on points of theology that he ought to know.

J. R.



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## CONFERENCE I: THE TREATMENT OF HERETICS IN THE MIDDLE AGES

IT is the part of an educated man to be able mentally to throw himself into a state and condition of society long passed away, far distant, very different from that in which he actually lives. An ill-educated person cannot do this : he is narrow-minded, and he judges perversely of whatever does not come under his immediate experience and inspection. We need an effort to picture to ourselves a world in which all Western Europe was Catholic. If we believe in Christianity, if we wish for its propagation, we must envy that unity of faith and regret its loss. Thanks to the rise of heresy, which culminated in the Reformation, India, China, Japan, countless races of men in Asia and Africa, remain un-Christianised, for Christianity appears to them as fragmentary and as divided against itself as their own religions. In Europe, the inheritance which the Reformers have bequeathed to posterity is the scepticism and unbelief which is the sign of our times. They who first brought in heresy upon undivided Christendom have much to answer for : they were the spoilers of the Church and of the Christian commonwealth : they were as a pestilence withering the growth of human society. Against these men as they first appeared, her own apostate children, the Church exercised her severities ; and the Christian State, one partial aspect of the Christian Church, was concurrently severe.

But, unlike Mohammedanism, the Church has not made it her policy to bring into her fold by force those who never in their lives belonged to it. The Church is not responsible for the doings of every Catholic Sovereign, as of the Spanish kings against the Moors and Jews, or the *dragonnades* of Louis XIV against the Huguenots, or the action taken against the Vaudois. The motive in those cases was a good deal political : there may have been also

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a mistaken religious zeal. But compulsory conversion, or forcible interference with the religion of those who never were Catholics, is not sanctioned by the standard theology of the Catholic Church, nor by her customary practice. Thus St. Gregory the Great writes to restrain a bishop who was hindering the Jews from keeping their feasts : “ They who differ from the Christian religion should be gathered in to the unity of the faith by mildness and kindness, by admonition and persuasion, lest they be repelled by threats and intimidation, who might have been invited to the faith by sweetness of preaching and the terror of the future judgment ” (Epistles, i. 35). About apostate Catholics he uses very different language in a letter to Gennadius, Exarch of Africa : “ Let Your Excellency put down their attempts, and crush their proud necks under the yoke of rectitude ” (Epistles, i. 77).

St. Thomas follows exactly the same line as St. Gregory : “ Of unbelievers, some there are who have never received the faith, as Gentiles and Jews. Such persons are on no account to be brought to the faith by compulsion, that they themselves should become believers, because believing is of the will : they are however, if possible, to be compelled by the faithful not to stand in the way of the faith by blasphemies, or evil persuasions, or open persecutions. And for this reason the faithful of Christ often make war on unbelievers, not to force them to believe, because, even though they had beaten them and got them prisoners, they would still leave them their choice whether they would believe or no, but for the purpose of compelling them not to put hindrances in the way of the faith of Christ. Other unbelievers there are who have at one time received the faith and professed it, as heretics, and all manner of apostates. Such persons are to be compelled, even by corporal means, to fulfil what they have promised, and hold what they have once received. As to take a vow is voluntary, but to pay the vow is of necessity ; so to receive the faith is a voluntary act, but it is of necessity to hold it, once received. And therefore heretics are to be compelled to hold the faith.” So St. Thomas, 2a, 2æ,

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q. 10 art. 8 ; in my *Aquinas Ethicus*, i. 328, where the following note is appended : " The heretics whom the mediæval writers had in view were the heretics of their own time, *i.e.*, apostate Catholics. The Protestant of our day falls under St. Thomas's first class of unbelievers."

Argumentation is often thrown away, because your opponent has in reserve at the back of his mind a notion which he does not state, but which, if admitted, suffices completely to set aside whatever you advance against him. Now the common Protestant notion is that religion is matter of private judgment, matter of human opinion ; that a man is not morally obliged to believe any particular point in religion any more than in chemistry ; that he is free to choose his religious beliefs, as he accepts conclusions in physical science, partly on his own observation and his own reasoning, partly on the authority of men who seem to him trustworthy ; but that whatever belief or opinion he holds, he is not morally accountable to God or to man for believing and thinking so. Such is the asserted right of private judgment, in its fulness. Of course it is not always asserted in its fulness, but often with hazy and ill-defined limitations. In this view any religious opinion may be disseminated with impunity, provided it be without brawling and breach of the peace. Opinion against opinion has no chartered rights. There is no protection of opinions, but free trade of open discussion—with the one limitation just specified, that the peace of the city be not broken.

Among Catholics, however, in respect of the dogmas of the Church, it is not a question of opinions but of faith. A Catholic has no right to an opinion against his faith. He sins by making up his mind to think and believe the contradictory of that which his Church teaches him as of faith. Such contradiction is never honest, never excusable, except in one case, which may very possibly occur. It is the case of faith and reason giving way together, so that the man becomes of unsound mind. Faith is a habit of intellect. If the intellect fails and becomes diseased, it may be unable any longer to support faith.

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The man then becomes at once an unbeliever and a madman, and so irresponsible. But faith, once held, cannot be inculpably lost, unless reason is lost with it.

When the Catholic Church and the Catholic State went hand in hand, a man was not punished for the thoughts of his heart, if he kept them to himself ; but if, being originally a baptized and professing Catholic, he proceeded to deny the Catholic faith, and to inculcate his denial upon others, he was first warned, admonished, and instructed ; then, if he continued obstinate, the Church pronounced him a heretic and contumacious, and handed him over to the State to suffer the extreme penalty of his heresy, contumacity, and apostasy. The penalty was dreadful and appalling, according to the spirit of the age. It was an age of strong convictions, deep sense of sin, and stern justice, habits of thought very opposite to the prevalent tone of our day.

The Church then as now did not enlarge her boundaries by compulsion ; but she used force to maintain the *status quo* within the limits of her own obedience.

In the Encyclical *Quanta Cura*, which prefaces the celebrated *Syllabus* of 1864, Pius IX writes : “ You know well, Venerable Brethren, that at this time there are found not a few men, who apply to civil society the impious and absurd principle of Naturalism, as they call it, and dare to teach that the best system of public society and the progress of civilisation altogether require that human society be constituted and governed without any regard to religion, as though religion did not exist, or at least without any distinction being made between the true and false religions. And, contrary to the teaching of Holy Writ, of the Church, and of the Holy Fathers, they hesitate not to assert that the best condition of society is that in which the Sovereign Power recognises no duty of restraining by statute penalties offenders against the Catholic religion, except so far as the public peace requires.”

In the same Encyclical he condemns the doctrine, “ that the Church is not competent by right to restrain with temporal penalties offenders against her laws.”



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Three of the condemned propositions of the *Syllabus*, nn. 24, 77, 78, are on the same matter. Pius VI, in his Bull *Auctorem fidei*, condemns this among the other errors of the Jansenist Synod of Pistoia, that the Church has no proper means of enforcing obedience to her laws other than persuasion. Leo X condemned this proposition of Luther : " The burning of heretics is against the will of the Spirit " : a condemnation to which we must presently recur. Finally, not to multiply examples, Gregory XI wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London ; " Cause the said John Wycliffe by our authority to be arrested and committed to prison " (Wilkins, *Concilia*, iii. 116).

These are instances enough to teach us that we must not go about to defend the Church by asserting that all severities exercised on heretics, as such, were excesses of the Civil Power, or here and there of misguided ecclesiastics. That were to abandon a position taken up by long lines of Popes down to the present day. And a well-read antagonist would quickly bring us to book, and ask whether he is to take us or the Pope as the accepted exponent of Catholicism. *Non tali auxilio nec defensoribus istis.*

As the Popes, so theologians, led by St. Thomas, who writes thus on the question, " Are heretics to be tolerated ? " " With regard to heretics two elements are to be considered, one element on their side, and the other on the part of the Church. On their side is the sin whereby they have deserved, not only to be separated from the Church by excommunication, but also to be banished from the world by death. For it is a much heavier offence to corrupt the faith, whereby the life of the soul is sustained, than to tamper with the coinage, which is an aid to temporal life. Hence if coiners, or other malefactors, are at once handed over by secular princes to die a just death, much more may heretics, immediately they are convicted of heresy, be not only excommunicated, but also justly done to die. But on the part of the Church is mercy in view of the conversion of them that err ; and therefore she does not condemn at once, but *after the first*

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*and second admonition*, as the Apostle teaches (Titus iii. 10). After that, however, if the man is still found pertinacious, the Church, having no hope of his conversion, provides for the safety of others, cutting him off from the Church by the sentence of excommunication ; and further she leaves him to the secular tribunal to be exterminated from the world by death " (*Summa*, 2a 2æ, q. 11, art. 3 ; *Aquinas Ethicus*, I. 333).

There is much here to offend those who are too ignorant to know, or too prejudiced to take account of, the peculiar state of society for which these things are written, and of which alone they are true. Pius IX wrote of an ideal state of things, " the best system of public society." St. Thomas lived in the thirteenth century, in what was to some extent an ideal state of things, when, but for the Albigenses in the south of France, the Greek schism at Constantinople, and the Mohammedan power in Spain, all Europe was Catholic. Where all are Catholics, there should be a close union of Church and State. The Civil Law and the Canon Law should support one another. Canonical sentences upon ecclesiastical offenders should be enforced by the civil courts, where the offender proves contumacious, and the Church seeks the support of the secular arm. As the Prince Bishop of Durham, Richard Kellawe, wrote, or one of his lawyers wrote for him in his secular capacity : " Our royal power ought not to fail Holy Church in her complaints " (*Registrum Dunelmense*, Rolls Series, i. 166). Hence the punishment of a contumacious apostate, even by death, is not in all cases against the Spirit of God. That such punishment took the terrible form of burning, is to be set down to the severity of bygone times, in all cases, civil, ecclesiastical, and even domestic : parents were stern in those days. Thus Luther's proposition : " The burning of heretics is against the will of the Spirit," contained an element of untruth at the time, quite enough to warrant its condemnation. Propositions are constantly condemned at Rome, not because Roman authority wishes to authorise their contradictories, but for being rash, mischievous,

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partially untrue, or untrue at least in the sense of their authors, as were many of the propositions of the Jan-senists.

Besides the ideal relation of Church and State, which perhaps obtains nowhere at the present day, we may observe two other relations which have actually obtained. The one we should pronounce intolerable, the other tolerable. It is intolerable, when a Christian Sovereign takes upon himself to manage the Church in his dominions. The most conspicuous instance is the ecclesiastical meddling of the Emperor Joseph II of Austria, whom Frederick the Great nicknamed "my brother, the sacristan." Hence the name "Josephism." Josephism gave infinite annoyance to Pius VI and to the Church. Other instances are found in the conduct of sundry Bourbon Kings, or their Ministers. The suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773 was an effect of this policy. Earlier instances of it are found in the ecclesiastical policy of the sons of Constantine at Rome, and of almost the whole line of Emperors at Constantinople.

When Josephism is the alternative, the watchword of Lacordaire and Lamennais, "a free Church in a free State," represents a very delightful settlement, or *modus vivendi*. That the watchword found little favour at Rome, was because it was there taken to be put forward as the expression of an ideal of perfection. The condition of mutual non-intervention between Church and State is not ideal. The ideal is a wholly Catholic State; and from a wholly Catholic State the Church has a right to expect more than mere toleration and liberty. But the ideal is hardly to be had in the world of politics. We are not citizens of wholly Catholic States, and we must not clamour for their privileges. It is enough for us in England and America that Catholics are free, as all other citizens are free, to practise the religion that pleases them, on the condition of neither suffering nor giving annoyance in its exercise. This is our actual condition, tolerable enough; indeed, as things go, it is a matter of much thankfulness.

The world is greatly changed since St. Thomas wrote,

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and first in “the formation of heretical bodies of long standing, the individual members of which, never having professed the Catholic faith, and being ignorant of it, and from infancy prejudiced against it, cannot without distinction be called heretics” (Translator’s note, *Aquinas Ethicus*, I. 332). The enactments of temporal penalties against heresy in the middle ages have no application to the members of these bodies. Were the population of England and Wales to consist, on the 1st of January next, of twenty-eight millions of Catholics, and two millions of Protestants, sole remnants of Anglicanism and Nonconformity, the Catholics would have no manner of right, divine or human, to use any sort of coercion or penal infliction for the drawing of those Protestants into the Catholic Church, or for hindering them from practising their own forms of religion.

The note just quoted remarks yet another change: “the irritation set up in modern minds at the sight of men punished for opinions, whether political or religious, a fact that the Church would have to reckon with, even if she had might on her side, and consider whether it would be prudent in her nowadays to visit heresy with all the ancient penalties, for the Church’s punishments are medicinal, and the same medicine does not suit every age and condition of society.” The question for any public authority, ecclesiastical or civil, in punishing, is not what retribution the delinquent deserves to suffer—that must be left to God—but how much of the suffering that he deserves it is expedient to inflict upon him as a deterrent to the rest of the community from imitating his example. Now punishment ceases to operate as a deterrent, first, when the scandal of the offence is greater than the punishment can remove—*e.g.*, a murder committed by a clergyman gives a shock to the public conscience, which is not made up by the detection and hanging of such a murderer; secondly, when the punishment creates sympathy for the culprit. Whoever dies with a halo of martyrdom about him,



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advances the cause for which he dies, even though it be a false halo and an evil cause. This consideration, borne out by experience of the past and by the known temper of men at the present day, may be relied upon also in the future effectually to deter the Catholic Church, in any ideal relation with the State, and in any plenitude of power, from ever repeating the severities of the middle ages upon her apostate children.

It was only apostate Catholics, and they contumacious, who ever were canonically consigned to the punishment of death. There was one schismatical and heretical community side by side with the Catholic Church in the days of her secular preponderance. That was the Greek Church, separated from Rome by the schism of Photius. But there is no instance, I believe, in mediæval history of any Greek being condemned to death by process of law, or suffering any legal penalty whatever, for denying the supremacy of the Pope, or the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son.

## CONFERENCE II : THE EXTENSION OF SALVATION

WITH the severity of the Church against heretics in this world, we have dealt. We are now to deal with the far greater severity that is charged upon her in regard of the world to come, that of pointing to everlasting fire as the destiny of the great majority of mankind.

We will lay down at starting three propositions that are of faith.

1. Whoever dies in the state of grace, is quite certain to see God in Heaven for all eternity, although that vision may be delayed by his having to suffer for a time in Purgatory.

2. Whoever dies in the state of mortal sin, goes straight to Hell for ever.

3. *God wishes all men to be saved* (1 Timothy ii. 4). *God rejoices not in the perdition of the living* (Wisdom i. 13).

This wish of God for the salvation of all mankind is called the "salvific will." It is a will real, but not absolute ; it is conditioned on the co-operation of men themselves, and also on the ordinary course of nature : God will not work a miracle to secure baptism for a dying child, nor let Lazarus carry the rich man's message from Hell to his five brothers (St. Luke xvi. 27—31). Along with this will goes the fact of the death of Christ for all mankind (2 Cor. v. 14, 15).

But as to what proportion of men die in sanctifying grace, and what proportion in mortal sin, nothing is revealed, nothing is of faith, and nothing is really known by theologians. If ever you find a theologian confidently consigning the mass of human souls to eternal flames, be sure that he is venturing beyond the bounds of Christian faith and of theological science. You are quite free to disbelieve his word. I do not believe it myself.

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As for such Scripture sayings as that *many are called but few are chosen* (St. Matt. xxii. 14), they are matter of immense debate, into which we shall not enter. Our Saviour would not gratify the curiosity of him who asked : *Are there few saved?* (St. Luke xiii. 23).

It is true that older theologians take a very gloomy view on this subject, holding it, not as of faith, but as their conclusion from premises of faith. In an age when men freely gave over one another to torture and death, they did not look for any wide and far-reaching final mercy of God upon the sins of humanity, multitudinous then as now, and needing great mercy. Still they spoke in excess of their knowledge, and in excess of their faith. We must not be dogmatic in supporting the contrary side. We have no more revelation than they had. Still we may opine and conjecture and argue for greater leniency. The rigorism of the older theologians culminated in Jansenism. Since the extirpation of Jansenism the pendulum of theological speculation has swung the other way, and theologians generally hope more of the mercy of God, or at least speak with less assurance of the range of His rigorous justice.

When we look at men as they live upon earth, and endeavour to take some augury of the lot that awaits them hereafter, the first danger that we see threatening their salvation is want of faith. *Without faith it is impossible to please God* (Hebrews xi. 6). Wilfully to reject the measure of divine faith offered to you is to incur damnation. But what measure of divine faith is offered to various individuals and races of men, we are unable to discern ; still less can we judge of their rejection or acceptance of it. St. Thomas says of one who disbelieves : " If he is not pertinacious in his disbelief [if he does not obstinately hold back from embracing the faith, when it is put fairly within his view], he is in that case no heretic, but only a man in error " (2a 2æ, q. 5. art. 3). And again, on the question whether unbelief is a sin : " Unbelief may be understood in two ways ; in one way as a mere negation, so that a man is called an unbeliever simply from not

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having the faith. In another way, unbelief may be understood as signifying contrary opposition to the faith, whereby one stands out against the hearing of the faith or even despises faith ; and in this the proper and perfect essence of unbelief consists ; and thus understood, unbelief is a sin. But if it is taken for a pure negation, as in those who have heard nothing of the faith [or, whatever they have heard, have never had the faith properly brought to their notice], it has not the character of a sin, but rather of a penalty, inasmuch as such ignorance of divine things is a consequence of the sin of our first parent. Unbelievers of this class are damned for other sins that cannot be forgiven without faith, but they are not damned for the sin of unbelief " (2a 2æ, q. 10. art. 1).

On this last remark of St. Thomas, as it is read in *Aquinas Ethicus*, i. 324, 325, I am responsible for the following Translator's note : " The hardest thing in the condition of men who have not the true faith is the difficulty of getting any grievous sin forgiven them. Still there may be, nay, there must be, channels of divine mercy, open to all men of good will." That note I now propose to follow up.

The word *damnation* in a technical sense does not involve hell-fire. It applies to children and others who die unbaptized without ever attaining to the use of reason. Technically, all these persons are damned, inasmuch as, in penalty of original sin in them unforgiven, they are deprived of that vision of God for which man was created. Yet theologians represent them as suffering no pain, and having everything in the natural order to make them happy, including some inferior knowledge and love of God. They are *in limbo*, on the margin of Hell (*limbus*, hence our word *Limbo*), but feel not its fires. There must be millions of human souls in this position.

Thereupon hangs a further question : what is to become at death of an unbaptized adult, who has never committed anything that was in him a mortal sin ? Various answers have been returned by St. Thomas and others. The fact is, we do not know the answer, and can



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only answer on conjecture. But there is a likely and plausible conjecture of some theologians to this effect, that such souls finally pass to the Limbo of unbaptized children. When we consider the almost infinite stupidity and ignorance and delusion that has obtained among heathen nations, under the shelter of which many a well-meaning blockhead or blunderer may have escaped at least formal mortal sin, it is difficult to reckon the millions of human souls who on this merciful conjecture would be damned indeed, technically speaking, and lost for original sin, but not condemned to eternal flames nor deprived of natural happiness.

Mortal sin among the heathen, whether of ancient or modern times, is terrible to think of in this particular, that we cannot well say how it could be forgiven. The heathen did many things that would be mortal sins in us, but possibly had some excuse in their ignorance. But they also did things which they themselves knew to be very wrong and exceedingly wicked. At Athens, or in any city of old, men were pointed at by their contemporaries as belonging to a bad set. How ever could these men have found forgiveness ? So far as we know, mortal sin is only forgiven by the infusion of sanctifying grace, and sanctifying grace supposes faith. What faith had the pagans ? What could they have ?

These are questions to which we can return no definite answer. But our ignorance is no reason for our consigning men to Hell in nations, Egyptians and Assyrians, Greeks and Romans, the friends of Cicero, the companions of Socrates, all to be lost. If there is one thing clear in Holy Writ, it is that God will not take men to Heaven in shoals, as belonging to a particular nation or class or locality, but each man shall be judged on his individual merits. And as of salvation, so also of condemnation. The angels *shall separate the wicked from the midst of the just* (St. Matt. xiii. 49) : shall they not also find out and distinguish just men everywhere in the midst of the wicked ? God is more ready to save than to condemn. He wishes the salvation of all ; His Divine Son died for all ; the condition of

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access to God, prescribed in the Epistle to the Hebrews (xi. 6)—*He that approaches God must believe that he is, and that he is a giver of reward to them that seek him*—is possible to all. Among the ancient Greeks, and other heathen nations, we find a distinct idea of sacrifice for the remission of sin. How God forgave these men for their sins, it is not for us to say ; but neither have we any right to say that He never did forgive them, or that, infants and simpletons excepted, He consigned the heathen peoples generally to the Hell of fire.

For baptized persons, not belonging to the visible fold of the Catholic Church, heaven is their assured position, if they die without ever having offended God by mortal sin. Such a sin would be, for instance, their seeing the duty of entering that visible fold, and still refusing to enter. If in any way they do sin mortally, they are at a decided disadvantage as compared with Catholics, in not having access to the Sacrament of Penance, and in being commonly ill instructed in the way how to make an act of contrition. An act of perfect contrition, or sorrow for sin for the love of God, is their sole way of recovering His grace and obtaining pardon ; and this way often they hardly know. Still some of them know it ; and God's merciful inspiration may lead others into it, ere they die. When the late Dr. Magee was apparently dying at Peterborough, we read in his Life how solicitous he was in repeating acts of sorrow for sin and having the Anglican form of absolution read over him. After the Bull, *Apostolicæ Curæ*, we cannot place confidence in the sacramental value of that absolution ; but of the value of those acts of contrition we may feel confident. A baptized man, who is not a Catholic, is not worse off for facilities of obtaining pardon than a Jew under the Old Law ; and the Jews were God's chosen people. If you have an Anglican friend whose inner life you can influence, get him to pray, get him to make acts of contrition, get him to do works of mercy—for works of mercy go to make final impenitence an impossibility.

Father Faber has written on the *easiness of salvation*

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for Catholics in his work *The Creator and the Creature*. This sound and able theologian, and holy and experienced priest, held strongly to the opinion, that of Catholics, who are such more than in mere name, the vast majority are saved. Of other men he was not so confident.

Still to all men God is good. If we can discover excuses, He will discern them all and more. If He has been so good and indulgent to us, to others also we may expect that He will be good and indulgent in ways that are to us unsearchable. We may surely apply to His dealings that Greek saying : “ What I have understood is excellent ; so also, I take it, is what I have not understood ”—*ἃ μὲν συνῆκα γενναῖα, οἶμαι δὲ καὶ ἃ μὴ συνῆκα*. But we must know, a great deal depends on Catholics as vehicles of salvation to other men. A Catholic whose life repels his acquaintance from his religion, will find one day that he has much to answer for. *That servant who knew the will of his lord, and prepared not, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. And unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required ; and to whom they have committed much, of him they will demand the more* (St. Luke xii. 47, 48).

### CONFERENCE III: THE NATURAL AND THE MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST

CHRIST is Head of the Church, the Church is His Body, and we are members of the Church and members of Christ. This is no mere metaphor. It is not figurative language, such as we use when we speak of the head and members of a college. The connection of us Christian men with Christ is so close, the union so intimate, that our best way of expressing it is to speak of it in terms of the union that obtains between the head and limbs of a living body.

In the Incarnation the Eternal Son of God united Himself with one humanity that thereby He might be united with all humanity. The Incarnation wrought no change in God, and brought Him no gain. It was for us men and our salvation. It was for all men, not merely for that one human soul which He created for Himself, and that one human body which He formed for Himself from the flesh of the Blessed Virgin Mary : not merely, I say, for that one human nature which He assumed to Himself. He took that nature to Himself in what is called an *hypostatic union*, or a union of two natures in one person ; so that God was Man and Man was God. The hands and feet of that Man, His flesh and His blood, were the flesh and the blood, the hands and feet of God, and adorable with the adoration that is due to God. What that Man did and suffered, God did and suffered, as Man. And, as God, that Man was able to say : *Before Abraham was, I am* (St. John viii. 58).

Our union with Jesus Christ is not hypostatic, we are not one person with Him. But it is a union of that closeness which ranks next to hypostatic union. Understand, I speak of the normal Christian, the baptized man who is in the visible communion of the Catholic Church, and who is also in the state of grace. Were I to speak of the



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Catholic who is living in mortal sin, or of the baptized man who is separated from the visible communion of the Catholic Church, I should have to speak with many reservations, limitations, and distinctions, which I will not now use, because I am speaking of none of these persons.

The union of Jesus Christ, God and Man, with the rest of mankind is effected by Baptism. We may consider some of the texts of the New Testament in which this union is described—remembering that these texts mean exactly what is said in them, that they are not to be explained away, or the meaning got out of them, in the sense of their being sucked dry of all meaning that any one need care to attend to, a process not uncommon in a certain school of Scripture interpreters. St. Paul then says to the Corinthians, ordinary Christians enough, full of faults, as his Epistles show, and dwelling in a city as corrupt as any in the Roman Empire: *Know you not that your bodies are members of Christ?* (1 Cor. vi. 15). *You are the body of Christ, and members of member*, or taking the more intelligible reading, *ἐκ μέρους, members each in his part* (1 Cor. xii. 29). And to the Ephesians: *We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones* (Ephes. v. 30). And again to the same, *bath made him head over all the church, which is his body, the fulness of him*, etc. (Ephes. i. 23). The word *πλήρωμα*, translated *fulness*, means of course *complement*; it is used of a ship's *complement* or *crew*, without which the vessel is incomplete. So Christ, the Head of the Church, is incomplete without the Church His Body. "For if He is the Head, we the members, the whole man is He and we," says St. Augustine (tr. 21 in Joan.). The same is the signification of our Lord's own words: *I am the vine, you the branches*, etc. (St. John xv. 1-8).

We can tell, though very imperfectly, some of the things which this union with Christ means. It means that, as Christ is the Eternal Son of God by nature, so we receive *the adoption of sons* (Galat. iv. 5). Adopted into a patrician house, according to Roman law, a plebeian became a patrician. Adopted sons of God, we are *made*

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*partakers of the divine nature* (2 St. Peter i. 9). We can call God properly our Father (cf. St. John xx. 17), whereas by nature and creation He is our Lord, and we His servants. As children, we have a right to God's inheritance, which is God Himself, and to God's own happiness, which is the vision and sight of God ; whereas a meaner knowledge of God and a humbler happiness for eternity is all that can be claimed by the best-behaved of creatures, as such.

There was in the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Solomon a peculiar brightness, called the *shechinah*, the visible sign of God's presence and favour in that spot (cf. 3 Kings viii. 10-12 ; Exodus xl. 34-38). The *shechinah*, to the Christian man, is the Holy Ghost dwelling in his soul and in his body, making of him a temple (1 Cor. iii. 17 ; vi. 19 ; 2 Cor. vi. 16), even as Jesus Christ was *anointed with the Holy Ghost and power* (Acts x. 38).

Baptism, which effects this union with Christ, makes men capable of receiving the other six sacraments, which without it would be invalid, even the greatest of them all, the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. You may put the Blessed Sacrament anywhere, and give it to any one : but unless the person receiving it be baptized, he does not receive it as a sacrament ; he is incapable of the sacramental union, as would be a dumb animal.

When we add the title to a glorious resurrection of the body, for of Christ it is written that, *it was impossible for him to be held fast by death* (Acts ii. 24), and a similar impossibility extends to His members—we have completed our brief survey of the privileges that go with membership of the mystical Body of Christ, which is His Church. It follows that a Christian is something more than man. He is *not of this world*, as Christ also was *not of this world*, not only standing aloof from its vices and follies, but belonging to an order of existence immeasurably above it. The text of the Psalm (lxxxi. 6), *I have said, ye are gods*, our Lord Himself explains to mean : *He calls them gods, to whom the word of God was spoken* (St. John x. 35), and who have believed and been baptized (St. Mark xvi. 16).

This high estate of a Christian is quite consistent with

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his being knocked and tossed about in this rough world, and feeling at times exceedingly small, helpless, unfortunate, foolish, and contemptible. He is on his trial here, in a state of probation. He is like his Lord, who, God as He was, *in the days of his flesh put forth prayers with a strong cry and tears, and learned obedience from what he suffered* (Hebrews vi. 7, 8); who had *to suffer and so enter into his glory* (St. Luke xxiv. 26). A child under age is kept out of the enjoyment of his fortune; so says St. John, *we are now children of God, and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be* (1 St. John iii. 2).

In His natural Body our Lord was visible during the term of His mortal life on earth. He went about, a man amongst men : all could see Him and know Him as man. His Divinity was unseen, though He gave indications of it, as He chose, by word and work. It was apprehended by faith. So is the mystical body of Christ, the Catholic Church, a visible society on the earth, conspicuous to all the world as a society and an institution, at the same time declaring herself by her acts and her teaching to be more than a human institution. That she is the mystical Body of which Christ is the Head, is a truth of faith to us members of that Body.

## CONFERENCE IV : THE CHURCH AND THE BIBLE

“**Y**ES, Phaedrus, there is this inconvenience in written composition : in fact it is like painting. The creations of the painter’s art stand and look as if alive : but if you ask them a question, they keep a most solemn silence. And books in the same way. You might fancy they spoke as themselves understanding what they say : but if you ask a question about any of their statements in a spirit of inquiry, the book has only one indication to give, one and the same always. Once written, every book circulates as well among competent readers as among those who are quite alien to its spirit. It has not the wit to speak to proper persons only, and not to others. Ill practised upon and unjustly railed against, it stands in constant need of the aid of its parent. It is unable to defend or succour itself” (Plato, *Phaedrus*, 275).

We do not get our legal guidance from open statutes, nor cure our ailments for ourselves at open dispensaries, nor is our religion to be derived simply from open Bibles. We need a living authority to apply the law, to dispense the medicine, to interpret the Bible.

We read in the Bible itself of difficulties in the way of understanding it. *In the which (epistles of our dear brother Paul) are certain things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction* (2 St. Peter iii. 16). One practical difficulty is to know whether certain precepts, as that of washing feet (St. John xiii. 14, 15), or of not resisting evil (St. Matt. v. 39), are to be taken in what appears to be their obvious sense or not ; or again, whether we are still bound to *abstain from blood and things strangled* (Acts xv. 29). We want some authority outside the Bible to tell us.

The Catholic Church fully recognises the assistance



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which the Holy Spirit gives to all who read the Bible with a devout mind and a sincere purpose of finding God in those inspired pages—and that not only in the case of Catholics, but of all men. The Church also, within the limits of her dogmatic decisions, allows a vast liberty of private judgment in the interpretation of the Bible. The Fathers of the Church, and Catholic commentators subsequent to the Fathers, differ among themselves widely as to the interpretation of particular texts, not as to points of faith, but as to what point of faith is or is not contained in this or that text, *e.g.*, 1 Cor. xv. 51. But what the Catholic Church cannot allow is either that the Holy Ghost, speaking to the individual soul, is the one guide to the interpretation of Scripture, or that private judgment is the one guide. She maintains that the power which our Lord had and exercised upon earth of interpreting the Scriptures (St. Luke iv. 21; xxiv. 27), He has since His Ascension committed to her. Accordingly she began to exercise it from the very day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 14-36; iii. 12-26). Whenever she rules the sense of any passage of Scripture (*e.g.*, of St. John xx. 23), she rules it infallibly.

Thus God follows the great rule of His Providence, providing for man through man, not only in temporal matters, in which every good gift that we have becomes available to us as members of human society, and through the co-operation of our fellow-men, and not otherwise,—but also in the needs of our soul and in matters of salvation. Whoever wilfully and wittingly rejects the guidance of the Church, rejects also the guidance of the Holy Ghost in his reading of Scripture. It is notorious that such head-strong men have put out the most opposite interpretations, all professing to be guided by the same Holy Spirit. As for private judgment, it is a sheer impossibility for men generally to search the Scriptures and find there a religion for themselves. They simply have not the time. They can no more be their own Bible-expounders and their own religious teachers, than they can be their own lawyers, physicians, engineers. They must walk by human faith,

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if they have not divine. Away from the guidance of the infallible Church, men drink in their Bible lore from the lips of some favourite preacher, some Pope of their own election, some good man to whom they have handed over their spirituality. In this busy world there is nothing else to be done.

About Bible-reading. The Church does not approve of editions of the Bible in the mother tongue without notes. Uninstructed readers of such a book as the Bible do need notes. If you find a man reading his *Æschylus* without a commentary, you presume that he has already attended lectures and had the benefit of many commentaries. Otherwise he may misunderstand his author, and suffer accordingly, if he presents it in the Schools. How does he know even that he has got the right text? A clever man will edit a Greek play, reconstruct the entire plot, surprise you with new readings and novel constructions put upon old readings: if you were familiar with the play before, you hardly recognise it as it emerges from his hands. Men have been equally adventurous in dealing with sundry portions of Scripture. As faith in the revelation of Christ is of more importance than any accuracy of knowledge required for examination purposes, and as a perverse understanding of Scripture may mean a perversion of faith, the Church does well in providing safeguards for her uninstructed children when they open the sacred volume—*knowing this*, as St. Peter says, *that no prophecy of Scripture is matter of private interpretation* (*privata interpretatione non fit*, says the Vulgate, which is explained by the Greek *ιδίας ἐπιλύσεως οὐ γίνεται*), *for prophecy came not by the will of man at any time, but the holy men of God spoke inspired by the Holy Ghost* (2 St. Peter i. 20), and therefore must be read by the light of the Holy Ghost, which is given through the Church.

The Bible is a collection of books that vary greatly in style and matter. The Epistles of St. Paul are not like the Canticle of Canticles: there is much difference between St. Luke and the Apocalypse. For the ordinary Christian, some books are much more profitable reading than others.

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The first thing is to know well the four Gospels, to be well acquainted with the story of all that our Lord did, suffered, and said. This concerns us much more than the vicissitudes of Israel under the Judges, or the succession of the Kings of Juda. In the Old Testament, the Sapiential Books, Proverbs, Wisdom, and Ecclesiasticus, form good ground for a beginner. It is well to know the Messianic prophecies. The latter half of Isaïas will commonly do the reader more good than Leviticus. St. Paul needs a commentator.

The Bible forms the theme of Christian meditation, Christian preaching, and Christian art : it is also the staple of the liturgy of the Church. It is a book to be meditated, and not gabbled over. It is the meditation-book of those who practice mental prayer. An hour's meditation on twenty verses will often teach us more of the inner mind of the Bible than many hours spent in Biblical criticism. It is possible to be a great Biblical critic, and have scarce any inward knowledge of the Bible at all : just as a foreigner in a continental city may write an erudite work on Oxford, with less real understanding of the University than an undergraduate who has kept two terms.

Holy Scripture is meant to be explained from the pulpit. So it was explained by the Doctors of the Church. We have their Homilies still, notably, those of St. John Chrysostom on Genesis, on the Psalms, on St. Matthew, on the Epistles of St. Paul. At the Gesù in Rome there is, or was, an institution called the "Scripture Lecture." When the Church is well on her feet in England, we hope to have a Scripture Lecture regularly delivered in some church in every large town.

The laity knew their Bible in the middle ages by seeing its histories carved in stone or wood, painted on the walls of churches, or in windows of stained glass. The Cathedral of Chartres, so numerous are its Biblical sculptures, has been called a Bible in stone. The clergy of the middle ages and of the Catholic Church to-day knew and still know great portions of the Bible from the Missal and the Breviary. Except the Hymns, Collects, and some of the

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Lessons, the Breviary is nearly all Bible. A priest saying his Office, if asked what he was doing, might well reply : " I am reading the Bible." Luther had been for years daily conversant with Missal and Breviary, when he made his notable discovery of the Bible in his convent library. What else he found, I know not : but he certainly did not find there the written Word of God for the first time.

I do not know, but I suspect that the average Catholic layman before the Reformation was better acquainted with the Old and New Testament than he is now, man for man, and class for class. The insane extravagances of Protestantism seem to have driven Catholics into the opposite extreme. Because the Bible and the Bible only has been proclaimed to be the religion of Protestants, we have shrunk too much from the Sacred Volume, which is ours by inheritance. Or is it that we have become less biblical as our devotion has grown less liturgical ? A more widely diffused knowledge and appreciation of the Missal, of the Breviary, and of the Bible, is a thing devoutly to be wished for in the Catholic laity of the present day.



## CONFERENCE V : INSPIRATION AND HISTORICAL ACCURACY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

IT is a common mistake to suppose that the theological opinions of a Catholic are all determined for him by dogmatic decisions of Pope or Council. As well say that all English law is the direct creation of Parliament. Parliament is indeed supreme, but the Judges interpret its Acts, digest them, apply them to the subject, and provide a settlement for the new cases that continually occur. The analogy is not perfect, but Catholic theologians stand to Pope and Council somewhat in the same relation as that in which the legal profession stands to Parliament. You cannot get your law merely from the Statutes of the Realm. You cannot get your theology merely from the *Bullarium* and *Acta*. A novice in theology soon learns, to his surprise, that documents from Rome do not always mean what to his simple eyes they seem to mean ; he must read them by the light of theological interpretation. No sooner is a Conciliar canon framed, or Papal utterance pronounced, or reply of a Roman Congregation given, than theologians settle upon it like a swarm of ants : they go over it all minutely, crowd and jostle one another, carry fragments up and down, and eventually put together out of the materials sundry new structures of their own. Meanwhile, the Pope looks serenely on at their proceedings, as Parliament looks on at the Judges. He can, if so it pleases him, reverse and undo their work. Occasionally he is called in, or steps in, to arbitrate and decide upon some of their disputes. But his usual policy is that of non-intervention. If you want to know Catholic doctrines, you must go to theologians for them. Some propositions, they will tell you, are of faith : others are certain, though not of faith : others it would be rash to deny, in the present state of our knowledge : others are probable : some are tolerable, rather

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hazardous, may be held tentatively until the Church shall otherwise pronounce. Nor will two theologians by any means always take the same view of the same proposition.

The Pope is never the first to speak. A lecturer leads his class continually on to new ground. He comes forth on Monday morning, fresh from his Sunday repose, to "invite your attention to a new branch of the subject, chap. vi., sect. 1." But the Pope is not Professor and Lecturer in Ordinary to the Church. He listens to the professors, lets them talk, and says his word when they have done. A Papal utterance marks the close of a long controversy. If I may vary the metaphor, the Pope does not ride on the engine, far less drive the engine, of theological speculation and discovery. He travels last, in the guard's carriage, from whence he occasionally makes some signal to the driver. His business is not to drive, not to get things on, not to progress, but to see that all is safe.

The books that make up the Bible were written under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and have God for their author.<sup>1</sup> So the Vatican Council. But what is inspiration? The Church has never exactly defined. We are thrown back upon the opinions of theologians. Yes, we have something better. In the disciplinary<sup>2</sup> Encyclical, *Providentissimus Deus*, of 18th November, 1893, Leo XIII affords us this commentary:—"By supernatural power He (the Holy Ghost) so prompted and moved them (the sacred writers) to write, and so assisted them in their writing, that all such things as He enjoined, and no other things, were duly conceived in the minds of the writers, faithfully written down, and aptly expressed with unfailing accuracy."<sup>3</sup> Yet, though the Pope has spoken, we still need the clear, shrill, ear-piercing tones of further

<sup>1</sup> *Spiritu Sancto inspirante conscripti Deum habent auctorem* (Conc. Vat., sess. 3, c. 2). The Vatican Council gives some account of inspiration, but not a complete and all-covering definition.

<sup>2</sup> I call it "disciplinary," for it is at least that, without prejudice to the opinion of any theologian who may think that he discovers in the Encyclical a higher character.

<sup>3</sup> *Nam supernaturali ipse virtute ita eos ad scribendum excitavit et movit, ita scribentibus adstitit, ut ea omnia eaque sola quæ ipse juberet, et recte mente conciperent, et fideliter conscribere vellent, et apte infallibili veritate exprimerent.*

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interpreters, to understand the value of his language.<sup>1</sup> These interpreters are the theologians. They have no claim to infallibility. I put some of their interpretations before you merely as probable, and (I consider) consonant with Catholic orthodoxy, so far as the Church has hitherto defined.

Thus it seems probable that there are degrees of inspiration. All Scripture is inspired: every genuine text of Scripture is the word of God: but there is not the same Divine *afflatus* upon every portion of Scripture: there is more of God in one text than in another. Clearly, not every chapter of Scripture is equally *profitable for teaching, for correction, for training in justice* (2 Tim. iii, 16). Two men may be both guided by the Holy Ghost, but one more than the other.<sup>2</sup> Thus we may mark off "prophetic inspiration" from "ordinary inspiration." As a specimen of the one, take *Isaias vii., xi., xl., liii.*; as a specimen of the other, the books of *Esdras* and *Maccabees*. Prophetic inspiration is denoted by such Scripture phrases as, *There came upon him the hand of the Lord, and he said, Thus saith the Lord* (4 Kings iii. 15, 16): *The vision which Isaias saw against Babylon* (Isaias xiii. 1): *I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard* (Apoc. i. 10). The person so inspired is consciously full of God: words are borne in upon him, visions are shown him, things past and future are revealed to him which he did not otherwise know. He writes in a rapture of ecstasy, without labour of his own in composing.<sup>3</sup> There is every reason to believe that

<sup>1</sup> οὕτως εἶπε μανθάνοντί σοι τοιοῦτον ἐρμηνεύσω—Æschylus, *Agam*, 615-6. Like Clytemnestra, but, for worthier reasons, a Pope may speak with studied reticence, not wishing to outrun the present knowledge of the Church. When shall we get Protestants to understand that the Pope, in our belief, is not omniscient?

<sup>2</sup> Two men are both priests, and inasmuch as both offer the Holy Sacrifice, they are to be regarded "with equal affection of piety and reverence"—*p̄ri pietatis affectu et reverentia*, as the Council of Trent (sess 4) says of all the books of Holy Scripture and all their parts. But inasmuch as the one is a bishop, and the other a presbyter, there is more of the priesthood in the former than in the latter, and of course more matter of reverence on that account. That there is more of Divine *afflatus* in one portion of Scripture than in another, I take to be, in the present phase of Biblical studies, a legitimate surmise, *donec ecclesia aliter*.

<sup>3</sup> See Plato, *Ion* 536, for such a divine possession, as he understood it. He describes it by such phrases as ἐνθεοὶ ὄντες καὶ κατεχόμενοι (*Ion* 533 E): ἐπίπνους ὄντας καὶ κατεχομένους ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ (*Meno* 99 D).

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the greater part of Holy Scripture was not written under any such conditions of prophetic inspiration. Indeed, we have occasionally the testimony of the sacred writers themselves that they were not in that way inspired (2 Mac. ii. 23-31; xv. 38; cf. Luke i. 1-4). They worked at their books as modern authors do at theirs. They were the subjects of what I have called "ordinary inspiration," the method and working of which I take to be closely akin to a divine operation which has gone on in the souls of all of you, I mean actual grace.

I must confess that, in illustrating the process of ordinary inspiration by the process of actual grace, I to some extent lie open to the charge of explaining one unknown by another. We have no certain knowledge of the psychological details of the workings of actual grace. The merit of the comparison lies in its giving us an "apperception" of inspiration. I mean an appreciation of it as being something not unlike something else of which we have often heard, something which is continually going on in ourselves, something even of which we are vaguely conscious. If I were called upon to describe the procedure of actual grace as I conceive it, I should liken our mind to a keyboard, the keys being the various ideas and motives already present in sub-consciousness; and I should go on to say that the hand of God pressed down the keys, making ideas and motives, appropriate to virtuous action, start into full consciousness within us. A rude and imperfect conception I know it is, but enough for the illustration needed. So I suppose God to work upon the mind of the sacred writer, awakening ideas and images that were dormant in his mind, so skilfully and so effectually, that ultimately, perhaps not without great labour on his part, the man wrote down exactly what God wanted written down, no more, and no less, and no otherwise; or, as Leo XIII puts it, "All such things as God enjoined, and no other, were duly conceived in the minds of the writers, faithfully written down, and aptly expressed," "aptly," that is to say, to the Divine purpose in ordering the composition.



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Let me make this difficult matter clear by a supposition. We have Catholic Judges : perhaps some one now listening to me may some day be raised to the bench. I suppose you have an important and difficult case to try, and on a particular day you foresee that you will have to sit six hours in court. You remember that you are God's vice-regent (Rom. xiii. 4) : one of the special functions of Deity, *to do justice and judgment*, has devolved on you. You bring all your legal knowledge to bear on the case, and pay your best attention. More than that, you find or make time to hear Mass that morning and receive Holy Communion. Now observe the outcome of it. Though you are a weak, erring man, as we all are, yet, during the six hours you are in Court, God may so effectually sustain you that in no portion of your judicial functions do you swerve in the least from His will. It is as though God Himself had sat on the bench in your form. God has judged the case through you, and all your judicial acts that day have been His acts. You have, in short, been inspired, not as an author, but as a judge. Yet no angels have whispered in your ear : no information from heaven has reached you : you have used your own human faculties. At the end of the day, you say you have done your best : you feel an indistinct consciousness that God has borne you up. But you would be amazed if you only knew how thoroughly and effectually and indefectibly He has been your guide, and made you in all things the minister of His will. If, instead of a judgment, a book had been the result, that book would have been inspired, with "ordinary inspiration." It would have been God's word more than yours.

Upon this example I have several remarks to make. First, that so far as we can understand, inspiration is not an action on the part of God so very unlike His continual activity even in the region of our own lives. Secondly, that the recipient of inspiration need not be conscious of it, not at least with any clear consciousness ; as we are at best but obscurely conscious of the reception of actual grace. Thirdly, that the inspiration of any writer of any

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portion of the Bible differs from the operation of actual grace in these two respects : (a) inasmuch as inspiration was granted to the writer in his public capacity of messenger of God to men, not for his private sanctification ; (b) in that, whereas actual grace is continually failing to take effect through the negligence of the recipient, the working of inspiration upon the sacred writers was so efficacious that they in no point failed to express the whole mind of God, so far as God deigned and designed to speak through them. Fourthly, that inspiration did not necessarily cease with the closing of the Canon of Scripture : there may have been inspired books written since. Fifthly, that of no books except of Holy Scripture have we the Church's guarantee that they are inspired. Sixthly, that of all books, the Bible is to us supremely venerable ; because in the case of other books, however pious and edifying, the inspiration of them, if they are inspired, remains to us unauthentic and uncertain. This much of theological speculation on the subject of inspiration.

I turn to the historical accuracy of Holy Scripture. There is no question among Christians but that the Bible is historically accurate in its narrative of the main facts of the economy of our salvation—as, that Christ was born of a Virgin, was crucified, and rose again. But great part of the Bible is taken up with historical details, of which we may say that it matters nothing to the saving of our souls whether the events happened as narrated or otherwise. Thus I read : *And Phaleg lived a hundred and thirty years, and begot Ragad. And Phaleg lived, after his begetting of Ragad, two hundred and nine years, and begot sons and daughters ; and he died* (Gen. xi. 18, 19). It would make no difference to my eternal salvation, if Ragad were proved to have been Phaleg's father. Catholic theologians of renown showed at one time some inclination to concede the possibility of Holy Writ being sometimes in error in details such as these. The chief point of interest in the Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* is the pronouncement of Leo XIII against this concession. His Holiness

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says : " It would be altogether wrong either to limit inspiration to certain portions of Scripture only, or to allow that the sacred writer himself has erred. We cannot tolerate their procedure who get themselves out of their difficulties by venturing on the admission that inspiration [and infallibility, following on inspiration] attaches to matters of faith and morals, and to nothing beyond." <sup>1</sup> Perhaps no utterance of Leo XIII has given greater offence to the world than this. Let me, then, go somewhat far back in the explanation which I offer.

Often in a pair of contradictory propositions each side of the contradiction is open to cavil. To make either side good, you must put in many qualifications, and have recourse to subtleties. A foreigner asks me one of those innocent questions which people do ask sometimes about the Universities : " Are the undergraduates at Cambridge (or Oxford) virtuous ? " What am I to answer ? Let me write down the answers corresponding to " yes " and " no."

" The undergraduates are virtuous."

" The undergraduates are not virtuous."

Of course I shall return the former answer ; yet Heaven knows how many qualifications I shall subsequently have to put in, to make it good. Still it remains the better answer.

A more scientific example. Suppose I have to choose between these two contradictory propositions :

" You may never tell a lie."

" You may tell a lie sometimes."

Upon some considerable study of the question, I affirm that you may never lie.<sup>2</sup> Roman authority, I am sure, would be against me if I took the other side. Now, as Newman says (University Sermon vii.), " Nothing is

<sup>1</sup> *Nefas omnino fuerit, aut inspirationem ad aliquas tantum sacre Scripturæ partes coangustare, aut concedere sacrum ipsum errasse auctorem. Nec enim toleranda est eorum ratio, qui ex istis difficultatibus sese expediunt, id nimirum dare non dubitantes, inspirationem ad res fidei morumque, nihil præterea pertinere.*

<sup>2</sup> See my *Ethics and Natural Law*, Stonyhurst Series, pp. 224-237.

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easier than duty in the abstract," and I may add, truthfulness in the abstract. But what of such a case as that in 2 Kings xvii. 17-21, when the woman hid Achimaas and Jonathan in the well, and said to Absalom's servants, *they passed on in haste*, did she do right in speaking thus to save their lives? And if she did right, was not that a lawful lie? It requires considerable ingenuity to argue that, supposing she did right, she told no lie at all. "The plain man" will cry out against such subtleties, and insist that you may tell a lie at times. Yet the plain man there is unquestionably wrong.

Now to the point. Take this pair of contradictories:

"Scripture contains some historical errors."

"Scripture contains no historical errors."

There are considerable objections to both propositions. As to the former, we may ask: How can that which is inspired be otherwise than true? Or, if Scripture be not all inspired, how are we to distinguish between the inspired and the uninspired parts? The difficulties of the alternative proposition are obvious. I shall touch upon some of them presently. Like the proposition, "You must never lie," it cannot be defended without considerable ingenuity and subtlety. Nevertheless, in the interests of truth, the Pope has bidden us defend and hold this second position: "Scripture contains no historical errors." Like the virtuousness of Cambridge undergraduates—or, better, like the inherent wrongness of all lying—this absolute inerrancy of Scripture can only be defended with many explanations and qualifications, some of which I proceed to show.<sup>1</sup>

The Pope expressly limits his assertion to the text as it emerged from the hands of the inspired writers. He allows for the possibility, indicated by conflicting readings, of

<sup>1</sup> Comparisons are useful to convey some inkling of a truth, and to get it remembered. But they must not be pressed beyond the point or points which the comparison is invoked to illustrate. The statement "undergraduates are virtuous," has this in common with the statement, "Scripture is free from historical error," that in both cases it is difficult to affirm and difficult to deny, so many explanations and qualifications being necessary either way, and yet affirmation is to be preferred before denial. I warrant the comparison no further than this.



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numerous small errors in any existing copy of the Bible. Besides false readings, there are probably *lacunæ* or gaps, where portions of the text have been lost. Fr. Hummelauer, S.J., conjectures a *lacuna* in Numbers xx. 11, a *lacuna* of such magnitude that the history of thirty-seven years has perished in it ! What a pitfall for a reader !

Before you argue that a man is in the wrong, you first ascertain what he means. The sacred writer meant what he said, doubtless, else he would be no truthful man. But what did he say ? He said, at least, what he intended to say, and seemed to himself to be saying at the time that he actually spoke, or wrote. But he did not say anything and everything that he seems to you to have said, now that his tongue has been silent and his hand turned to dust for thousands of years. I once attended the lectures of an Italian professor, who went out of his way to criticise a then recent work of Newman. The professor read out passages with an enunciation quite intelligible to English ears, and himself understood the meaning of all the parts of speech contained in those passages. But, as we his audience soon perceived and remarked to one another, he quite failed to see the drift of John Henry Newman, and was incapable of judging what he so imperfectly understood. How much less would he have understood had he possessed only a translation, and that a defective one, or if Newman had been an author of remote antiquity ! Few Bible readers read Hebrew ; and of those few who can read Hebrew, as my Italian professor read English, not all have an Oriental cast of mind ; or can enter into the spirit and sense of an old Semitic record or prophecy. You do not look for the precision and literal accuracy of Cambridge in an historian of the date of Moses or Samuel. Writers of that day made no pretence of conforming to such a standard : their countrymen did not expect it of them. They were not writing for the History Tripos ; they spoke popularly : you persist in reading them with western precision, and thereupon you detect an error, but it is an error of your own importation. They epitomise, as early writers do generally, somewhat in the abrupt fashion of a

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schoolboy, for they were not skilled in the diffusive methods of Macaulay : you read them as you would read Macaulay, that is, you read them as they did not write : the outcome is more error. They present documents in the way of quotation, for what they are worth : you read them as statements for which the author solemnly pledges his credit. They teach moral truth in the form of an allegory, which allegory you take for history, and then prove it unhistorical. They put a name to stand for a dynasty : you take it to stand for an individual, and then reproach them for too brief a chronological reckoning. Thus in a text already quoted (Gen. xi. 18, 20) : *And Phaleg lived a hundred and thirty years, and begot Ragad ; and Ragad lived one hundred and thirty-two years, and begot Seruch ;* is Ragad the name of an individual, or (like " Pharaoh ") of a dynasty, Ragad I, Ragad II, to  $n$  terms, Phaleg being the father of Ragad I, and Ragad the  $n$ th being the father of Seruch ? The hypothesis would be intolerable in a modern history. But the study of Matt. i. 1-17 ; Luke iii. 23-32, is enough to convince any man that Scripture genealogies are not drawn up on the methods of the modern historian.<sup>1</sup>

The dealing with these possibilities in particular instances is a matter of much patient study and caution. It is like carrying out the axioms of war or the axioms of surgery into actual practice. Research must be pushed a long way further ere we shall find much ground for confidence in detailed applications. In general we recognise this feature of early Scripture narratives, that they are a region " where more is meant than meets the eye " ; more it may be, or less.

The Old Testament was not written to harass and perplex us : it is not preserved in the Church as a tormenting riddle. Many statements in the Bible we cannot explain, nor need we : they do not concern our salvation. The

<sup>1</sup> If what I may call " the principle of Orientalism " holds in the comparatively modern Gospel narrative, how much more in Genesis ! For illustrations, see my notes on Matthew i. 3, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 ; ix. 18 ; xxi. 12 ; xxiv. 3, 34 ; xxvi. 17 ; xxviii. 1, 8, 9, 16 (*Scripture Manuals for Catholic Schools—St. Matthew*).

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question of practical importance is, what shall become of man at the end of time, not the exact course of his history in the beginning. For the explanations that our scientific curiosity still desiderates, we await the further progress of Biblical science within the Catholic Church. Difficulties to us inexplicable for the present we will treat as the Jews treated the stones of the altar of holocausts which the Gentiles had defiled : *They put away the stones in a fit place, until there should come a prophet to answer about them* (1 Macc. iv. 46).

## CONFERENCE VI: FAITH DISTINCT FROM REASON

**W**E make an act of Divine faith in any article of our creed, when we take God's word for it. Faith is belief on the authority of God revealing. The motive of faith is the truthfulness of God who speaks. Faith is an act of submission of the intellect to God ; it is a venture upon God's word ; and at the same time it is a laying hold of some truth which He has revealed, inasmuch as He reveals it and vouches for it.

To a Catholic, the whole credit of God is pledged for every article of Catholic faith. If one single article were false, our faith in God would be gone ; the whole edifice of religion would crumble. It all stands or falls together. One must be a Catholic all over, or nothing. There is an inconsistency of thought in going out from Catholicism into any form of heresy, such as that of the Old Catholics. If you cannot trust God and take His word for everything, how believe Him at all ? Hence, reasonably enough, Catholics in our time commonly do not fall into heresy, but if they cease to be Catholics, they become Agnostics, and profess uncertainty of all religious truth.

It may be said : " I am willing enough to believe in anything that God may reveal, but how do I know that He has revealed anything ? " A very pertinent question, and one that takes a deal of answering. It is not the object of this Conference to answer it ; at the same time we cannot altogether pass it by. We will therefore deal with it briefly.

The evidence that God has given a revelation comes to different persons in different ways. They who witnessed the visible ministry of Christ and His Apostles, had before their eyes the evidence of miracles, attesting the divine message. *The works themselves that I do*, says our Saviour, *give testimony of me that the Father hath sent me* (St. John v. 36). *My preaching was not in the persuasive*



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*words of human wisdom, but in the showing of the Spirit and of power*, that is, in the evidence of miracles wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost, says St. Paul (1 Cor. ii. 4). To us Catholics the chief evidence that God has spoken is the abiding moral miracle of the existence of the Catholic Church. That Church is a wonder to all the world, but to none is she so wonderful, so admirable, so manifest a witness of God, as to those who do not simply gaze upon her from without, but view her majesty and her beauty from within her sacred precincts.

We hold an article of faith usually in two ways : first, on faith, supernaturally, inasmuch as we are *taught of God* (1 Thess. iv. 9). Secondly, in some sort, on natural grounds of reason, inasmuch as we could defend the article in controversy with an adversary who was not satisfied to take it on faith. These two ways form the subject of this Conference. Faith, then, as such, is not an assent to a reasoned conclusion because it is a conclusion of reason. We do not hold a thing on faith because in some manner we can prove it, but solely in reliance on the word of God revealing it. The trust and venture of faith is not on syllogisms, but on God.

There are some articles of faith that we can evince by philosophical reasoning with more or less of success ; for instance, the great moral truths, and the rudimentary principles of religion, as that God will punish the wicked and reward the good in a life to come. But generally the truths of faith and revelation are not susceptible of this sort of intrinsic proof. All we can do is to show from history and tradition that they are parts of Christianity : then we can argue the general merits of the Christian system, and its claims on human belief. This or that doctrine, we say, you must take as part of a system, which on the whole, you are unreasonable if you reject. So Cardinal Franzelin has accumulated an overwhelming mass of evidence of the Christian tradition on the Real Presence. We may point out to an opponent that

As I am a Christian, faithful man,

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I bow to that tradition, and so should he, if he is a Christian.

It will happen however to most of us, if we take the injudicious course of breaking lances with all opponents on the field of controversy, that we shall frequently encounter adversaries more learned and better skilled in argument than ourselves, and shall be fairly beaten out of the field. This has happened to Catholic controversialists again and again, so far at least as concerned the particular merits of the case in dispute. Yet we do not read of the beaten Catholic changing his faith on that account. It would have been absurd, it would have been wicked of him to have abandoned his faith merely because he was beaten in an argument in defence of it, or because, without his arguing at all, he was assailed, whether by spoken word or on printed paper, with difficulties against faith for which he knew no answer.

— We reach a truth of faith by two ways, one of faith, and one of reason. When the way of reason is blocked to us by some argument that we cannot answer, the way of faith still remains open, and we are bound to go by it, and to hold the truth all the same.

An example : what if some future Pope some day (not at all a likely supposition) were to take up what is called the *comma Joanneum*, 1 St. John v. 7, with all the force of his authority, and commend it at once to the outward reverence and interior acceptance of all the faithful as a genuine portion of Holy Scripture ? We should all make our act of faith accordingly, and know by faith that it was Scripture. But when we came to weigh the critical evidence for and against it, as we might weigh the like evidence for and against that disputed chapter of Thucydides, iii. 84, it might easily happen that the evidence, as we saw it, went all the other way, against the genuineness of the text. What should we then do ? Observe that the evidence either way is not, and cannot be, absolutely cogent and overwhelming. You can never set that critical question in the same full light in which you have the evidence for the existence of Alexander the

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Great. If you can, all we can say is, that our supposition is absurd, and that the Holy Spirit will hinder any Pope from making any such definition ; for since truth cannot contradict truth, it follows that as we are naturally certain of any particular truth, and supernaturally certain that the word of the Church is true, we have a resultant certainty, natural and supernatural combined, that the word of the Church will never be found in conflict with that particular truth.<sup>1</sup> What then should we do in the supposed case about the text of the Three Witnesses ? Simply avow that the genuineness of it is beyond us as a matter of biblical science and criticism, and yet hold it firmly for genuine on faith. The way of natural reason is blocked for us, but we reach the point proposed by the way of faith.

And as in this imaginary case, so in many actual cases. We hold by faith to the Vatican definition of the infallibility of the Pope ; and yet perhaps we should not know what to reply to an Anglican Professor of Church History, who made out Pope Liberius an Arian, and Pope Honorius a Monothelite. We take the Second Epistle of St. Peter, as the Church tenders it to us, for part of the New Testament : we are not learned enough to vindicate by argument its disputed place on the Canon. We should quite break down in an attempt to prove Matrimony to be a sacrament. Still we bow with the assent of faith to the Council of Trent telling us that it is so.

Our faith must be of this sturdy, independent nature, if we are not to be *blown about by every wind of doctrine* (Ephes. iv. 14). Otherwise we are Catholics in the morning, and in the evening we are Agnostics. The first disputant we meet, more erudite or more subtle than ourselves, will carry off our faith at the point of his lance. Faith is called by the Council of Trent "the root of justification."

<sup>1</sup> "He (the Catholic) is sure, and nothing shall make him doubt, that if anything seems to be proved by astronomer, or geologist, or chronologist, or antiquarian, or ethnologist, in contradiction to the dogmas of faith, that point will eventually turn out, first, not to be *proved*, or secondly, not *contradictory*, or thirdly, not contradictory to anything *really revealed*, but to something which has been confused with revelation" (Newman, Lectures on University Subjects, viii. 4).

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All deeds of holiness that make us acceptable to God, and deserving of a reward in Heaven, spring from some motive of faith. Such deeds are difficult to human flesh and blood, even when faith is firm ; they would become impossible if faith were vacillating, wavering, and subvertible by argument.

These years that you spend at the University are years of learned leisure, compared with your other years, and the lives of the generality of men. Yet certainly no one of you has the time, to say nothing of the ability or the inclination, to sound the depths of religious controversy, and build up a theory of this world in its relations to the next, all by the working of your own reason on the data of your own knowledge. If you cannot be Christians on faith, you cannot afford to be Christians at all. Mere reason will never Christianise you, nor keep you Catholics.

This is the tradition of the Fathers of the Church ; as of St. Gregory Nazianzen, who writes in his poem on Virtue :

Little way go arguments towards the knowledge of God :  
For every argument has another argument standing over  
against it :

But my Word has not a faith that can be turned about.  
It is a great thing to cling to the Word once spoken.

And of St. John Chrysostom, on Romans iv. 20 :  
“ Faith is clearer than proof from argument, and more convincing, for it is impossible for any second argument to come atop of it and make it totter. He that is convinced by argument may be unconvinced again : but he that rests on faith has stopped his ears against all argument that could mar his faith.”

We will end with the saying of one who deserves to be listened to in close proximity to the Fathers of the Church. It was a saying of Cardinal Newman : “ Ten thousand difficulties don't make one doubt.”<sup>1</sup> And the explanation is plain. The difficulties are in the way of reason, but the doubt would be in the way of faith. And the two ways are not the same.

<sup>1</sup> *Apologia*, p. 239.



## CONFERENCE VII : REASON AND FAITH TOGETHER

**M**R. LECKY (*History of European Morals*, pp. 200, 201) describes what he calls "intellectual virtue": it is "to proportion on all occasions conviction to evidence, and to be ready, if need be, to exchange the calm of assurance for all the suffering of a perplexed and disturbed mind." It appears from the context that "the calm of assurance" which he is thinking of is the certainty of divine faith: "evidence" means argumentation against faith; and the "perplexed and disturbed mind" is the endowment of the man who has now begun to doubt of what he once firmly believed on God's word with the assent of faith. And this descent from the calm assurance of the Christian to the perplexity and disturbance of unbelief, Mr. Lecky takes to be a feat of intellectual virtue, using that term in a sense unknown to Aristotle.

Our best reply to Mr. Lecky is to return his invitation, and press upon him the exercise of the virtue which he describes. There is a certain calm assurance of those who have made up their minds against the claims of the Catholic Church. Such persons by no means keep an open mind to hear what the Pope and his bishops and priests have to say for themselves. Their first position in religion is this: Whatever else we are, we will not be Catholics. When such a person abandons this calm resolve, and with sincere desire of God's truth looks to see whether haply that truth be not contained in the teaching of the Catholic Church, he is apt to fall into an agony and perplexity of mind. This agony can hardly be chronic. He will get out of it in one of three ways. One way is by becoming a Catholic, a step which may entail pecuniary difficulties and sore separation from friends, but will at least ensure intellectual rest and peace. Another way is by reverting to a steady disbelief in the Catholic Church, perhaps

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developing a positive hostility to Catholicism and even Christianity. A third way, perhaps the way most commonly taken, is to give up the study of religion as too tremendous a subject for human faculties, and bury oneself in business, or politics, or literature, or law, or science, or simply in amusement.

The second and third ways we leave here uncriticised, and return to the consideration of the first. The object of the present Conference is to argue the utility and value of Reason in conjunction with Faith. The first use of Reason in such conjunction is to lead an inquirer to the faith. If he has not the faith, he cannot attain to it ordinarily except by some process of inquiry and reasoning in proportion to his capacity. Conceivably he may be converted by God's truth bursting upon his soul in a moment by intuition, as it burst upon Saul by the vision that he had on the road to Damascus. But such conversions are not to be looked for, and the promises of them are often illusory. Conversion, then, ordinarily is a work of reason, abetted by prayer, originated and borne out by God's grace.

A shore has to be gained : without a boat it can never be reached. If the shore is the revealed truth of God, the rowing process may represent the exercise of reason. Let us say that it is impossible to land the passenger as one would land an infirm old woman. It is impossible simply to lift him up and lay him on his back on the grass. He must step bravely out, when the oars have brought the boat near enough, otherwise he will never set foot on the shore. To step out in mid-stream would be folly : not to step out, when the boat is hard by the land, is renouncing the purpose of the voyage. Mere reasoning will no more put a person in possession of revealed truth than mere rowing will set him on shore. When reasoning has brought him near enough, he must close with the truth, venture upon it, step out upon it—if he will not be of the number of those who are *always learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth* (2 Timothy iii. 7). He must make up his mind to believe. Assisted by God's grace, he must make his act of faith, now or perhaps

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never. If he never will do anything but reason and discuss, he certainly never will believe ; for faith is not an act of ratiocination : it implies, as St. John Chrysostom says (on 1 Cor. i. 22), “quelling arguments and submitting yourself to the Master.” Ere the argumentative process leading to faith was complete, it would have been folly to quell arguments, like the folly of jumping out of the boat in mid-stream. Every priest knows that a convert may be received too soon, before he has been sufficiently instructed and convinced, before his reason and understanding have been sufficiently exercised upon the truths which he is finally to embrace by faith. We may say in imitation of Ecclesiastes (ch. iii.) : *All things have their time : a time for inquiring, and a time to hold aloof from inquiries : a time of reason, and a time of faith.*

All this is aptly declared by one whose words, we hope, will never die away in Oxford. In Cardinal Newman’s *Loss and Gain* (part ii. ch. vi.) we read :

Now it need not be denied that those who are external to the Church must begin with private judgment [or what Mr. Lecky calls “intellectual virtue”]; they use it in order ultimately to supersede it, as a man out of doors uses a lamp in a dark night, and puts it out when he gets home. What would be thought of his bringing it into his drawing-room? What would the goodly company there assembled before a genial hearth and under glittering chandeliers, the bright ladies and the well-dressed gentlemen, say to him if he came in with a great-coat on his back, a hat on his head, an umbrella under his arm, and a large stable-lantern in his hand? Yet what would be thought, on the other hand, if he precipitated himself into the inhospitable night and the war of the elements in his ball-dress? “When the King came in to see the guests, he saw a man who had not on a wedding-garment.” He saw a man who had determined to live in the Church as he had lived out of it, who would not use his privileges, who would not exchange reason for faith, who would not accommodate his thoughts and doings to the glorious scene which surrounded him, who was groping for the hidden treasure and digging for the pearl of price in the high, lustrous, all-jewelled temple of the Lord of hosts; who shut his eyes and speculated, when he might open them and see. There is no absurdity, then, or inconsistency in a person first using his private judgment and then denouncing its use. Circumstances change duties.

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This, then, is one office of Reason, to help in leading men to the faith who had it not before. But also for the faithful themselves, as such, Reason, is of the highest value. It relieves the pressure and strain upon faith, when it is attacked by argument from without or by the mind's own questionings from within. Faith, as we have shown, is equal to the strain. The result of adverse argument is not any doubt of matter of faith, but still it is a temptation, and temptation is always painful to those who love good. It is painful as an accusation against a mother, whom one tenderly loves and has learned thoroughly to trust. The accusation is not entertained in the mind for a moment as a thing that could possibly be true, but perhaps it cannot be disproved, and then it pains us. When a good friend rises up, and by argument scatters the charge to the winds, we owe him gratitude for a very sensible relief. So we are pleased when the orthodoxy, if not the personal character, of certain Popes is vindicated by historical argument. We knew and firmly held by faith that our Lord would never permit His Vicar to teach heresy from the Chair of truth. Not being historians, we were unable to refute the charges of heterodoxy which men, who have given their lives to history, bring against this or that Pope. We chose rather to take the word of God than the word of man upon the point. We reminded ourselves how possible it was to read even original records with prejudice, or in misconception of the subject-matter. Still the confident assurance of this eminent anti-Catholic historian loomed upon us as an ugly bogey, till one day we read with relief how an historian of equal eminence and learning had been able to write down against all his allegations, *non-proven*.

The function of reason is rather negative, to show the inconclusiveness of objections, than positively to prove a dogma or a fact of faith. Much of the matter of faith is beyond the reach of direct proof. But when a disputant fresh from the schools swoops down upon us with an argument, as he says, for the impossibility of transubstantiation, and we find that he has got hold of the Lockian



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definition of substance, as the sum of the sensible qualities of the object, we congratulate him on the logical sequence of conclusion from premises, but send him back to learn a better definition of substance. We have not proved transubstantiation, but neither has he disproved it.

We cannot do better than take the Church's own estimate of the importance and value of reason to her cause. She never will allow that her dogmas are in contradiction with reason, or that reason is of no avail to establish conclusions in preparation for faith.<sup>1</sup> *Credo quia impossibile*, was Tertullian's paradox, but the Church has never endorsed it. Tertullian was a headstrong, violent man, whose untamed impetuosity finally carried him out of the Church into the Montanist heresy. A nineteenth century Tertullian arose in Lamennais. He, too, struck at human reason, denying its competency to prove the existence of God. God, he said, was known by the tradition of the human race, not by reason. Such was Traditionalism. But Gregory XVI would have none of it, and Lamennais fell from the Church which he was not allowed to defend and advance according to his own notions. The Church went on disavowing his repudiation of the aid that reason lends to theology. In the Vatican Council (can. 1, *De revelatione*) she made Traditionalism the subject of her heaviest censure: "If any man says that God, one and true, our Creator and Lord, cannot be known with certainty by the natural light of human reason through the things that are made, let him be anathema."

If a man of scant leisure spends his time, and a man of limited means spends his money, lavishly upon a certain pursuit, there is the clearest evidence that he sets store by that pursuit. The Catholic Church generally is not rich, and she wants her ministers for service early in their lives. Yet, under the name of Philosophy, Theology, or Divinity studies, she insists on putting men through a severe course of close reasoning on things of faith, leading

<sup>1</sup> The exact words are:—*Natus est Dei Filius: non pudet, quia pudendum est. Et mortuus est Dei Filius: prorsus credibile est, quia ineptum est. Et sepultus resurrexit: certum est, quia impossibile.*—Tertullian, *De carne Christi*, cap. 8.

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up to faith, or consequent upon faith, and that for three, four, or six years, ere she will ordain them. And experience proves her right. One of the greatest blows that the Church received in the French Revolution, as great a blow almost as she ever could receive, was the closing of her ecclesiastical Seminaries wherever the Revolution or the wars of the Revolution spread. It was the policy of Julian the Apostate reiterated: for Julian would have cut off the Christians from all culture and exercise of mind. That temporary paralysis of philosophy and theology had its effect in enfeebling the teaching ability of the Church's ministers far into the nineteenth century.

The Church has nothing to gain from prejudice, confusion of thought, ignorance, mental darkness, surface habits of mind, and lazy reluctance to investigate and face spiritual realities. No cause in the world suffers so much as her cause suffers from these human miseries. Though faith is the very breath of her nostrils, yet she cries for reason also, the cry of St. Augustine, *Ama valde intellectum*,—"Love understanding exceedingly."

## CONFERENCE VIII : THE SUPERNATURALNESS OF FAITH

**P**ROTESTANTISM has culminated in an ignoring of the supernatural order and a falling back upon natural virtue. The very meaning of the word *supernatural* is lost in England. One educated man will tell you that the supernatural is the field of research of the Psychical Society, ghosts, apparitions, haunted houses, or the phenomena of Spiritualism. He has taken the *præternatural* for the supernatural. Another may instance miracles, such as are reported from Lourdes. Now miracles may enter into the supernatural order, but the supernatural is not necessarily anything miraculous. Since the day of your baptism, there have been manifold supernatural workings in the soul of every one of you, yet, I take it, not one of you has ever been the subject of a miracle.

No, by the supernatural we do not mean ghosts, and we do not mean miracles. Faith is no miracle, and yet it is the first virtue in the supernatural order. We might conceivably have had religion, and worshipped God, and arrived at an eternal happiness, sufficient to have satisfied our souls,—all that, without entering into the region of the supernatural. Such would have been our duties, and such our reward, had God pleased to treat us simply according to what we are as men, His creatures, His servants. Reverencing Him and observing His law here, we might have looked forward to an eternity for our immortal souls, to be spent without sorrow or temptation among the fairest works of His hands, contemplating in them His beauty, who dwelt in light inaccessible, Author of all. God has willed to treat us above the deserts of our nature, raising us from servants to friends, and even to be His children. That is to say, He has placed us in the supernatural order, the term of which is the sight of Him in Heaven, the sitting as it were at table with Him there,

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as St. Thomas describes it, and seeing Him as friend sees the face of His friend at table, the clinging to Him and being with Him, as children are with their father at home. Incidentally and occasionally, in the sort of way that Pontius Pilate got into the Creed, anything may make towards this end, even wars, pestilences, and bad Popes. But whatever properly and of itself makes for the end just stated, is truly a supernatural agency : such are the Incarnation and Passion of our Lord, the Church, the Bible, the Papacy, the seven Sacraments, grace, and, to come to our point, the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Faith is the first virtue that of itself makes for the vision of God. It is the root of all supernatural holiness. No man can ever attain to see God, who has not had in some manner, while on earth, the supernatural endowment of faith.

Like other supernatural virtues, faith cannot be exercised without actual grace. This statement needs to be clearly understood. We must have a clear idea of what we mean by actual grace. We will imagine ourselves taking, not a very romantic journey, but enough for our purposes of illustration, from Oxford to London. We carefully observe the face of the earth, first as the forces known to geological science have made it. We think of the cooling of the earth's crust, and its shrinking into huge wrinkles, valley and hill. We see the ice age, and the glacier filling and slowly scooping out what is to be the valley of the Thames. Then we see the floods over all, tides and currents hurrying the gravel hither and thither, and depositing it in beds. Our meditations may wander on to tropical forests and their denizens, till we are arrested by the thought that nothing of all this explains the state of things under our eyes, except in its outer framework and containing walls. The whole face of nature has been transformed by man and man's doings, nowhere more thoroughly than between the towers of Christ Church and those of Westminster. Now are human agencies and the forces of glacier and flood the same ; more complex here, more simple there, but not differing in kind ? Is it one



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and the same physical force, that has scooped out the valley of the Thames, and created the University of Oxford? There are men who, if they mean what their books imply, should answer *yes*; but not many will venture upon such a downright answer. We might call the doctrine monstrous. We will content ourselves with saying that it is wholly unproved. It is also wholly in conflict with Catholic teaching, a first principle of which is that man, as an intellectual and moral being, lives in another order than that where mere physical laws prevail.

We have there, modifying the aspect of the earth, first, certain physical forces, of old predominant, and still powerful; secondly, the mind of man adjusting nature to purposes of his own—in fact, *humanising* nature. So within the mind of man himself, there are two sorts of changes discernible; the one due to sensory impressions, to associations of ideas, to conversation with other men, and to the man's own personal will at work upon himself, intensifying certain ideas and desires and effacing others—all these changes in the mind may be called *natural*; the other sort of changes due to God conversing with man, and man answering to the impulse received from God—these changes in the mind are *supernatural*, they are the operations of actual grace. God cultivates and *divinises* man, even as man cultivates and humanises the earth. Actual grace, then, is the direct intercourse of God with the soul. It is not any infusion of knowledge. God does not Himself discharge the functions of catechist or religious instructor. He leaves man to be taught his religion by his fellow-man. But, of the ideas thus provided, God causes some to strike the intellect strongly and vividly. Of the motives to conduct thus suggested, God urges some with especial force upon the will. This is actual grace, addressed to man's two highest faculties, intellect and will. Every act of faith is prompted by this two-fold movement of actual grace; otherwise it cannot come about at all.

When an adult pagan in process of conversion to Christianity has done his reasoning and inquiring, there

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comes upon him what St. Thomas calls "an internal impulse of God inviting" (2a 2æ, q. 2. art. 9. ad. 3). This adds clearness to the conclusion, which his reason has already drawn in favour of the Christian position. To the will it is a repetition of the Scriptural invitation : *It is I, fear not : only believe* (St. Matt. xiv. 27 ; St. Luke xxiv. 36-39 ; St. Mark v. 36). When the man does believe and makes his first act of faith, a special aid of grace carries his will and intellect through that act. It is an act done with difficulty, and is often remembered ever afterwards as the outcome of a great struggle. And no wonder, for it is an act elicited without any previous corresponding habit in the soul. It is like a succession of good strokes in a game, taken without any previously acquired skill. The thing cannot be done, unless the player's hand be guided by another, and even then it is done with difficulty. The first act of faith in an adult, having no previous habit of faith in his soul, involves quite an extraordinary concurrence of God.

The habit, or virtue, of faith is infused into the soul at baptism. It is no inpouring of knowledge, where ignorance was before ; no awakening of a dormant intelligence, as is that of infants ; but it is a facility of believing any doctrine of faith already taught, and a predisposition to believe the doctrines of faith when they shall afterwards be communicated to the mind. This predisposition may be afterwards counteracted by ill instruction or evil courses. Still one is often filled with admiration at seeing how readily the truths of faith are taken up, when they are propounded to baptized children. Even in baptized Catholics every act of faith requires actual grace, but the operation is usually very facile and easy, the supernatural habit pre-existing, unthwarted by heresy.

Persons sometimes ask us : "How can you believe such a doctrine as transubstantiation or Papal infallibility ? I could not take it up if I tried." And we answer : "Oh, it is because you have not faith ; if you had faith, it would be all easy to you." The answer is correct, and according to our Lord's words (St. Mark ix. 23). It is question of the exercise of a supernatural faculty, which some men

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have not. Why they have it not, is not ours to judge. But it is equally by an exercise of supernatural power that the priest consecrates at the altar, and he, or any other Christian, believes in the Sacred Presence that is produced by such consecration. The one power is given by Holy Order to God's minister, the other by Baptism to God's child. The two powers differ in many respects, but the one is not more supernatural than the other. An act of faith is an impossibility to mere man, as man, quite as much of an impossibility as the consecration of the Eucharist. *No man can come to me* (by faith, as the context shows), *unless the Father who hath sent me draw him* (St. John vi. 44).

Besides the supernaturalness of faith there is what divines call the "obscurity of faith"; and the latter attribute affords some confirmation of the former. We must not expect faith to do for us more than it is warranted to do. Only a limited number of truths are revealed: of these only can we have the certainty of faith, and of no more. Our curiosity would like revelation to lift the veil a little further, say on the mystery of predestination. That curiosity cannot be gratified, and we have to fall back on reason, a very uncertain guide on such ground. We want further revelation, and it is not given. But our mind craves for more than revelation. Still but on the frontiers of the kingdom, we long to *see the king in his beauty*; still in mid-ocean, we would fain *see the land afar off* (Isaias xxxiii. 17). The land is out of sight, and can only be believed in for the present. Then at least we should like to feel as though we saw it, by a sort of *mirage*; and that is occasionally granted us. There are occasions in life when faith seems to have passed already into vision. The realities of religion stand out before our view, like the nooks and crannies of the hills on a fine summer evening. For those times we might almost read *faith was not for thought was not*, in the celebrated lines of Wordsworth:

In such access of mind, in such high hour  
Of visitation from the living God,  
Thought was not, in enjoyment it expired.  
No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;

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Rapt into still communion that transcends  
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,  
His mind was a thanksgiving to the power  
That made him ; it was all blessedness and love.

We have at those times faith, and something more—that feeling of faith which ascetic writers call consolation. Only in rare moments can we expect much of that, once “the warm rains of childhood are over,” to repeat a phrase Bishop Hedley used here the other Sunday. The faith of Christian man in his prime, journeying along the dusty roads of life, is often hard, dry, unfeeling ; and its objects are shrouded in obscurity. But the faith is still there, robust against many attacks, too wonderful to be a mere growth of nature. It is the impalpable contact of the Father’s hand, drawing His elect to *the land of vision* (Genesis xxii. 2).



## CONFERENCE IX : PRIVATE JUDGMENT.

**T**HE essence of Protestantism is private judgment in matters of religion. We will endeavour to discern what exactly that comes to. It comes, we shall find, to a denial of any revelation given by God to man, which it is a sin for man to doubt or disbelieve. Sins against faith vanish from the record of evils. This is a position singularly unscriptural.

Off the field of religion, private judgment is an excellent instrument. It is the instrument of all progress in the physical sciences. A chemist goes into his laboratory : he has read of an interesting series of organic compounds which Dr. X. has investigated : he repeats some of Dr. X's. experiments, and agrees or disagrees with his conclusions. For what he has not time to investigate, he accepts Dr. X.'s authority, and acts upon it, and teaches others according to it ; or he declares Dr. X. no competent witness, and disbelieves his observations. In all these repeated judgments upon the facts of chemistry, the idea of any moral obligation to believe one way or another never once enters his mind. Tell him it is a sin not to believe in Dr. X.'s series, and he will laugh outright at the grotesque notion of there being any bounden duty to believe this or disbelieve that in the region of chemical science. And the notion *is* grotesque and absurd.

Now, is religion on the same footing with chemistry ? Is it grotesque and absurd to speak of any bounden duty to believe or disbelieve any given religious doctrine ? This question is a sort of first point of Aries in the region of religious controversy. The importance of it is too often lost sight of by controversialists, who lose one another, and sometimes themselves, in discussion, from not having at the outset come to a mutual understanding on this primary point. Private judgment reigns supreme in physical science : is it to reign in religion ?

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Private judgment is the denial of any teaching authority that can bind the conscience to believe what is taught. But it is one thing to deny authority, another thing to escape consequences. Though there be no authority to teach, still the consequences of error may be very grave, and even fatal. There are two possible forms, therefore, of private judgment in religious matters. The one may be expressed thus: "Believe as you like; there is no authority to constrain or guide you; and whatever you choose to believe or disbelieve, it will make no difference to your final happiness or misery." The other runs: "There is indeed no authority to guide and command you: you must make out your religion for yourself: at the same time, you solve the religious problem at your peril: a wrong solution may mean everlasting misery." The first of these two forms we may call in heraldic phrase, *private judgment rampant*; the second, *private judgment couchant*.

The first simply declares religion to be out of the sphere of practical life—to be an amusement and pastime, a pageant, like a Jubilee Procession, that you may see or not see as you will, without any difference to your vital interests—or a study, like Attic Greek, or high mathematics, or metaphysics, three subjects that no one can be blamed for being ignorant of, or loses any tangible good by neglecting them. Therefore, whether we have a Creator and Lord, or owe our existence to a fortuitous environment; whether there is a Heaven and a Hell, or either, or neither; whether the spirits of the men who peopled this globe a hundred years ago are anything now or nothing; whether the quality of our future existence, if such is to be, does or does not depend on our service of God in this present life,—all these contingencies are of no practical interest to humanity, are mere food for the philosophic dreamer and the idle recluse. It is difficult to conceive how any thinking man can take such a view of religion. And yet, without being exactly formulated, it is silently assumed and acted upon by multitudes. However, as a theory, this form of private judgment is

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wholly untenable, and we need waste no more words on it.

What we have called "private judgment couchant," is the true basis of religious Protestantism. Religious Protestants invoke indeed the authority of the Bible ; but the Bible to them is only a starting-point for private judgment, the beginning of its multifarious and tortuous mazes. And the very Bible itself is now on trial before the tribunal of private judgment. These Protestants invoke yet another principle, which Bishop Hoadley made celebrated as the theme of the Bangorian Controversy, that all that God looks for is sincerity, and that He will never condemn the sincere believer, or disbeliever either, however mistaken. True, if the sincerity be of that quality of gold thrice-assayed which alone will make weight in the balance of Eternal Justice. True, if the sincerity be accompanied by inquiry, impartial, patient, and deep, in proportion to the importance of the subject. But not true, if the alleged sincerity be mere self-conceit and obstinacy, or the hasty conclusion of a frivolous mind, that has never really braced itself to the task of *seeking God, if haply it might feel after him and find him* (Acts xvii. 27).

There are two objections to this way of "private judgment couchant" : that it is a way of herculean labour, if followed seriously ; and that it is not the way taught by Christ and His Apostles. About the labour of it, consider what it would involve for you. Doubtless you could show good cause why no new task of great mental effort should be obtruded upon your morning or evening hours. There remain the afternoons. After lunch then you must forego field and river ; you must sit somewhere, reading, writing, and thinking ; or pace soberly and sadly up and down your College walks, in meditation on the rival arguments for Theism, Atheism, and Pantheism ; for Creation and Evolution ; for Utilitarianism, Hedonism, and the Categorical Imperative. You may have a Bible, if you like, to help you ; but first you must learn Assyriology, Egyptiology, and Hebrew, for the Old Testament : Greek and German for the New : you must

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settle the Canon of Scripture, and decide on the meaning of the term Inspiration. If in despair you resolve to rest the whole issue on the word of Professor Placet, who has got up all these subjects, you must have reasoned grounds, well thought out, for preferring him to Professor Non-placet, who you know disagrees with him entirely. You work hard, or pose as working hard, to acquit yourself creditably in the Schools ; how hard should you work on an inquiry that, for all you have yet ascertained, may be fraught with eternal happiness, or misery ?

It must be owned that this portentous labour of private judgment, sounding the immensities and eternities in search for a religion, is not at all what the Prophets of old held out to be the occupation of them that *seek the Lord and his face*, that their *soul may live* (1 Chron. xvi. 11 ; Psalm lxviii. 33). Rather they promise that such searchers shall have an easy time of it, so far as the labour of inquiry goes. Thus Isaias (xxx. 20, 21) : *Thy eyes shall see thy teacher ; and thy ears shall hear the word of one admonishing thee behind thy back : This is the way, walk ye in it, and go not aside neither to the right hand nor to the left.* And the whole of ch. xxxv. foretells a very much more comfortable state of things, *e.g.*, v. 8 : *And a path and a way shall be there, and it shall be called the holy way . . . and this shall be unto you a straight way, so that fools shall not err therein.* So too Jeremias xxxi., quoted in Hebrews viii. : *And they shall not teach every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord : for all shall know me from the least to the greatest of them.* This does not look like any laborious exercise of private judgment.

Nor did our Lord and His Apostles enjoin any such exercise. They enjoined another way, much simpler and more expeditious and open to all men of good-will. It is the way of docility and faith and hearkening to the living authority, first, of God Himself made Man, and secondly to the authority of other men whom He has sent and commissioned to teach in His name. From the opening of His Ministry He invited no intellectual inquiry into



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the doctrines that He taught ; He did not lay them down for criticism : it was to be enough for his hearers that He taught them, a messenger from God, who proved His mission by miracles (St. John v. 36 ; x. 25 ; St. Mark i. 22 ; St. Luke iv. 32, 36). It was not at the discretion of His hearers to believe Him or not, as they pleased. He was angry at those who rejected His overtures (St. Luke xiv. 21), and threatened them with *the outer darkness and gnashing of teeth* (St. Luke xiv. 24 : cf. St. Matt. viii. 12 ; xxii. 13 ; xxv. 30). For the protest, *We will not have this man to reign over us*, in that spiritual kingdom, the first law of which is faith in the word of Christ, the parable tells of final vengeance : *As for those my enemies, who would not have me reign over them, bring them hither and kill them before me* (St. Luke xix. 14, 27).

This would be rigorous treatment, of one man by another man. But it is question of God and man, God as ruler and man as subject, God as teacher and man as taught : now between God and man there is an infinite gulf of being. The imperative reason for submission of intellect is because *os Domini locutum est*—*the mouth of the Lord hath spoken* (Isaias lviii. 14).

Another reason, the main argument of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians and to the Romans, is this. We have all sinned : we began in original sin, we have committed many actual sins. 'There is no forgiveness for our sins except through Jesus Christ ; and His conditions for forgiveness are that we believe and be baptized, and mean to hold to our faith after Baptism. There is no righteousness to be had before God by the mere observance of the Jewish law, given though that law was by God Himself, if men will try to observe it without faith in Christ : still less can man be just before God by carrying out any other law or convention of society. *For all have sinned and do need the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus* (Romans iii. 23, 24). They remain with their sin unforgiven (cf. St. John ix. 41), *who not knowing the justice of God, and seeking to establish their own, have not submitted themselves*

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*to the justice of God, which is not of the law, but of faith in Christ* (Romans x. 3 ; Philipp iii. 9).

Our Lord sent His Apostles, not to lecture, as philosophers or social reformers, but to *preach*, κηρύσσειν, i.e., to make proclamation of a doctrine which men were to accept upon His word. They were His envoys, as He was His Father's envoy. To reject Him was to reject His Father ; and again, to reject His Apostles was to reject Him. *He that heareth you, heareth me ; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me ; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me. Into whatsoever city you enter, and they receive you not, going forth into the streets thereof say : Even the very dust of your city that cleaveth to us, we wipe off against you. . . . I say to you, it shall be more tolerable at that day (of judgment) for Sodom than for that city* (St. Luke x. 10-16).

And the Apostles were confident that this their tenure of binding authority remained good after our Lord's Ascension. *Vengeance to them who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall suffer eternal punishment* (2 Thess. i. 8, 9 ; cf. Galat. i. 8 ; 2 St. John 10, 11).

It is a violation of logical method, in a complicated case, to endeavour to establish the whole case at once. You must prove one point after another ; for instance, that deceased met his death by violence, before you endeavour to fix the guilt of it upon the prisoner. No attempt is here made to determine the amplitude of the doctrines that Christ and His Apostles taught as of faith, to be accepted of obligation under sin. No attempt are we making just now, to prove that this body of obligatory Christian doctrine was co-extensive, say, with the Creed of Pius IV. All that we show is that Christ and His Apostles did teach some definite doctrine, no matter what, commanded men to accept it on faith, and forbade all disbelief as sinful. Which means, that the Church was not founded in private judgment, and that the Apostolic Age was not Protestant. So far as the Reformation went on lines of private judgment, it was very unlike the work of Christ and His Apostles.

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We Catholics hear spoken to the Church of to-day in her missionary capacity not less than to the Apostolic Church the words : *As the Father hath sent me, I also send you* (St. John xx. 21). As envoy of Christ, the Church may use the words which He used as envoy of His Father :

*He that believeth in me, doth not believe in me, but in him that sent me ; and he that seeth me, seeth (in authority) him that sent me. . . . And if any man hear my words and keep them not, I do not judge him ; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world : he that despiseth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him—the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last day* (St. John xii. 44-48). Private judgment in our day means no Teaching Church ; in our Lord's day it meant no Teaching Christ. Any day it means no Revelation, that we are bound to hearken to and accept ; and no Faith.

## CONFERENCE X : PROSELYTISM

**P**ROSELYTISM is one of those question-begging appellations which stand for something that every one repudiates. A *proselyte* was a Gentile who *came over* to Judaism as a convert. Proselytes were very numerous, and they bore on the whole a bad name. There was a saying of the Rabbis, not to trust a proselyte unto the twenty-third generation. They are only once mentioned by our Lord, not with praise. *Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte ; and when he is made, ye make him a child of hell twice as much as yourselves* (Matt. xxiii. 15). Observe that there was no obligation on a Gentile to become a proselyte to Judaism. The Gentile was bound to adore one true God, and keep the rest of the ten commandments, except that of the Sabbath : he was not bound to turn Jew.

On the other hand, when Christianity was preached, a man who heard it, and had it brought home to his conscience, was bound to become a Christian. This is apparent throughout the New Testament : cf. Mark xvi. 16 ; John iii. 18, 36 ; Acts xiii. 48 ; 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. The reason was two-fold : first, because Christianity is the Kingdom of the Messiah, who rules by rights over all men (cf. Psalms ii. and lxxi. ; Luke xix. 14, 27) ; secondly, because *all men have sinned and are fallen short of the glory of God*, and can only find forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. iii. 23-25). The preachers of the gospel avoided the word *proselyte*, with its evil associations, and call their converts *neophytes* (1 Tim. iii. 6), as *newly planted*, or rather as *newly blended and incorporated* with Jesus Christ, becoming members of His mystical Body (Rom. vi. 5).

All denominations of Christians in this country are generally agreed that it is well done to bring a man of no religion to believe in Christ, to receive baptism, and



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frequent some Christian church or chapel. Witness our Bible Societies, our Church Missionary Societies, and even our Colonial Bishops. The odious name of *proselytism* is not given in reference to such a conversion.

When heresies arose, the Church proclaimed the duty of reverting to orthodoxy; when schisms, of returning to unity, of "being with the bishop," as St. Cyprian says. She could not endure her children being Arians or Nestorians, and made every effort to recover them from such heresies. It is true that heresy and orthodoxy, schism and Catholic unity, were very strangely mixed up together in the fourth century. That was in great part due to the unholy preponderance which the Roman Emperors, some of them Arians, had been able to assume in the Church. The Roman Emperor was a sort of god upon earth. When he became a Christian, he protected the Church, but in no small degree controlled it also. The Church, however, righted herself, and dissociated herself from heresy and from imperialism.

When the revolt from the Church in the sixteenth century took place, the new-born Protestantism proselytised with a strong hand. It is enough to mention the penal laws in England and Ireland. Never did Proselytism go greater lengths. But the modern mind is very different from the mind of Elizabeth and her counsellors. It is now considered that a man had better indeed be a Christian of some sort, but that one denomination of Christianity is as good as another. This idea is not uncommon among ill-instructed Catholics. They do not seem to understand why a Methodist should become a Catholic, or the advantages which as Catholics they possess over the Methodist Connection—the truth of salvation in its fulness instead of fragments of truth; the sacraments and sacramental forgiveness of sin; and a vastly heightened chance of salvation—to say nothing of the objective obligation of being a Catholic and nothing short of a Catholic. This obligation other Christian denominations will not see. They are indignant when any baptized person tears himself away from the associations

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of his youth, to go among strangers and to become a Roman Catholic. They cannot conceive any man in his right senses taking such a step. They are sure there must have been some undue influence, some terrorising and intimidation of the conscience, some trickery or deception: he cannot know what a horrid extravagance Romanism really is. For, while they allow that all forms of Christianity, Romanism included, are more or less good, there is lurking somewhere at the back of their heads a notion which has come down to them by heredity from grandfathers and great-grandmamas, that Romanism is the most corrupt of Christianities, so corrupt, indeed, as to be barely Christian at all. How then could X. Y., possessing as he did already in Methodism, or Congregationalism, or in High Church Anglicanism, all gospel grace that a reasonable man could wish for, how could he have gone and turned Roman Catholic? One word is the explanation of it all, *proselytism*.

We certainly have no mind to intimidate, cajole, or hoodwink any person in order to draw him to the Catholic Church, and that for one excellent reason amongst many reasons, because the person so converted would be most unlikely to stay with us and remain a Catholic. The panic would pass off, the lie would be detected, the truth concealed would out, and he would be gone from the midst of us. To make a Catholic of a man who is not likely to remain a Catholic, is positively to do him an injury. Back he flies, and his last state is worse than the first. As proselytism now signifies the use of unfair means to a good end; as it signifies any method of drawing people to Catholicism that is not perfectly straightforward and honest, we repudiate and abhor proselytism.

At the same time the Catholic Church is bound to manifest herself, and the Saviour whose salvation she bears to men. She is the city built on a mountain which cannot be hid (Matt. v. 14); she is the light which must not be let burn under a bushel (Matt. v. 15). One of her four great festivals is the Epiphany, which signifies *manifestation* or *showing forth*. She is a debtor to all men (Rom.

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i. 14) ; she has a message for them all, and even a command (2 Cor. v. 19, 20). Woe to her if she preach not the Gospel (1 Cor. ix. 16). She is in the world to show forth Christ. And this is the office of the whole body, not of the clergy only, but of every Catholic in his station and degree. It is your office in this University in some manner more than of the religious who have come here. You are more in evidence than they are in the familiar intercourse of daily companionship. Piety in a religious is taken for granted, it is his profession ; in you it is looked for with interest, and taken not without a certain grateful surprise. It is yours to draw men towards Catholicism, not by thrusting controversy upon them, still less disparaging what they venerate in religion—you are not likely to be so injudicious—but silently and unostentatiously by your lives and behaviour. Not that I look for conversions in Oxford. There are many difficulties in the way of that. But whenever I see a number of undergraduates together, on the river or in the playing-fields, I say to myself : “ There are men there who will die Catholics ; in twenty-five or thirty years God’s grace will have led them to the true Church.” So it has been for the past half century ; so, doubt not, it will be. Who knows how the first advances of that grace are gradually being made now ? In your persons they may be learning for the first time that there is nothing in Roman Catholicism incompatible with the best qualities that make the glory of Oxford, and of English-speaking races all over the earth.

Two words of SS. Peter and Paul, and I have done. *Ready ever to offer a defence to every one that asks you an account of the hope that is in you*, says St. Peter (1 Pet. iii. 15) ; and St. Paul, *Let your speech be ever gracious, seasoned with salt, to know how to answer every one that asketh you* (Col. iv. 6). Which means that you be ready to say, when you are asked : “ Catholics believe this,” “ We don’t believe that,” “ That is an open question ” ; and at times have the modesty to confess, “ I am not sure,” or “ I don’t know.” Better say that than assent to uncatholic doctrine.

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The second word is a Greek word which St. Paul addresses to the Corinthians, telling them to be ἐδραῖοι (1 Cor. xv. 58), literally, *seated*, from ἔδρα, *a seat*. It recalls Shakespeare's "the seated hills," and Jeremy Taylor's, "then let us sit down in religion." It denotes, not listlessness, but what I have heard put down as a common attribute of Oxford men, attaching, I imagine, rather to the junior members of the University, *quiet assurance*. "A Roman Catholic? Why, what else do you take me for?" In the matter of the Catholic faith this *quiet assurance* cannot fail to be also a *prudential assurance*.



## CONFERENCE XI : WITCHCRAFT, A STUDY IN THE SUBJECTIVE METHOD

WHAT I call the subjective method of proof consists in observing the sequence of ideas current among mankind, and arguing thence the sequence of facts thereto corresponding, as though to know the ideas and the state of men's minds at any given epoch was to know the facts about which the ideas are conversant. On this method, if we wish to know whether a thing be right or wrong, we have only to enquire whether men nowadays generally hold it to be right or wrong: the conscience of mankind at this rate being the standard of morality. By the same method, if we wish to know the true principles of architecture, or the laws of taste in painting, poetry, or music, or the art of government, or any other point that is a topic of general conversation and public opinion, we have but to mingle in society and read the literature of the day, and this knowledge of ideas will prove to be also a knowledge of things: we shall understand what is wise administration, or a noble edifice, or a fine piece of music,—for our time.

There are great advantages about this method: it is a vast saving of research, it enables us to make up our minds with very little trouble. An instance of this method, applied to religious truth might be the following: "Our forefathers were much disturbed by what the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews called: *a certain terrible expectation of judgment, and a burning fire that is coming to destroy the adversaries* (Heb. x. 27); educated men at the present day have put out of their heads all apprehension of the day of judgment; therefore there is no day of judgment to be apprehended." Or again: "Past ages believed in witchcraft: the present age does not believe in witchcraft: therefore there is no such thing as witchcraft." It will be observed that this method

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entirely dispenses with objective proof. No theology has shown that a day of judgment will never come ; no science has demonstrated that such a creature as a real witch is an impossibility. " That the disbelief in witchcraft . . . is the result, not of any series of definite arguments, or of new discoveries, but of a gradual, insensible, yet profound modification of the habits of thought prevailing in Europe ; that it is, thus, a direct consequence of the progress of civilisation, and of its influence upon opinions ; must be evident to any one who impartially investigates the question. If we ask what new arguments were discovered during the decadence of the belief, we must admit that they were quite inadequate to account for the change " (E. G. J.).<sup>1</sup>

Still we have heard of rude awakenings of individuals, and even of whole classes and nations of men, facts breaking in upon them quite contrary to their established ideas. There is always danger in trusting to an idea, because it is an idea, however common. It is not a scientific confidence. It may be *secure*, in the old sense of that word, but it is not safe.

But it will be said : " Surely the beliefs of a civilised age must be nearer approaches to fact than the beliefs of an uncivilised one." Yes, if those beliefs are constituent elements of a genuine civilisation. But there is a spurious civilisation, which is a real decadence,—such as the civilisation dominant at the French Court in the reign of Louis XV. With genuine civilisation there are mixed up many elements of decadence. Europe is more civilised in the nineteenth than it was in the thirteenth century. It would be a paradox to deny that. But not everything that we see and hear around us is an evidence of our advance. We have not among us the architects of the thirteenth century, nor the schoolmen. King Edward I. would not greatly admire our flock of paupers, nor the tone of mind of some of our wealthy and well-to-do members of society.

<sup>1</sup> Edward Gibbon Junior, cited as E. G. J., is a man of straw, but the opinions put in his mouth are typical opinions of the day, opinions which Newman spent his life in fighting as well before as after 1845.

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There are sounds in the air that may prove to be heralds' trumpets, proclaiming our last hour and the end of our triumphs. It is very rash, therefore, to point to every idea, or every absence of idea, in the modern mind, and contend that it must be in accordance with fact, because it is modern.

Ours is a civilised age certainly, an age of advanced progress, of criticism, of culture, of education high and wide. Much deference is due to the belief of educated men of our time. Such belief may after all be mistaken, but the fact of educated men holding it is an argument of some probability in its favour. Educated men however hold beliefs contrary to one another, even in our time, and even on the subject of witchcraft. To some extent they all are agreed that, in the rough and rude justice of bygone centuries, hundreds of persons were put to death for witchcraft, who were innocent of that crime. This belief we may accept as true. It was however no peculiarity of witchcraft, that innocent people were proclaimed guilty and done to death under that name. Perhaps quite as many innocent persons were put to death as traitors. Edmund Campion, Henry Garnet, and scores of other Catholic priests and laymen, who were sincerely loyal to the thrones of Elizabeth and James I, suffered under those monarchs the penalties of treason, not less cruel than the penalties of witchcraft.

Now one of the fallacies of the subjective method of proof is this. The reasoner takes hold of what happens to be his own opinion and the opinion of his school of thought, or as Bacon would have said, of his tribe, and calls upon all the world to bow down and accept it as the belief of educated men. Of some educated men certainly, but other men, quite as well educated, reject it, and brand it as a mere idol of the tribe. The disbelief in witchcraft,—as though witchcraft were a mere imposture or hallucination, there being really no devil to deal with,—is simply an idol of the tribe of rationalists. They lie open to the reply which Job made to his friends: *Therefore you only are men, and wisdom shall die with you? I too have a mind,*

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*as you have, and am not your inferior* (Job xii. 1, 2). Rationalism has given a character to our age, but not perhaps the character of progress. The larger is not necessarily the sounder portion of the community. It may be that the true type of the intellectual and moral progress of the nineteenth century is not found in the educated rationalist, but in the educated Christian. Another possibility of error in the application of the subjective method to the annihilation of witchcraft !

I do not hold a brief for the educated Christian of the nineteenth century. I am not the authorised exponent of his views on witchcraft. But, from the conversation that I have had with men of that type, I am led to think that their views might be expressed, tolerably closely, in some such propositions as these.

1. Treason is a crime that has been committed, and may be committed still : so is witchcraft.

2. Treason and witchcraft are alike improbable crimes in England at the present day : therefore of neither the one nor the other is an accusation lightly to be credited : any accused person is presumably not a traitor, nor a witch.

3. Some hundreds of years ago, while many innocent persons were condemned as traitors and as witches, yet attempts against the life and dignity of the Sovereign, and attempts at dealing with the devil so as to obtain præternatural powers, were not uncommon.

4. In some instances at least, præternatural powers were in this manner actually obtained.

“Those men should be treated with scorn, and, indeed, sternly corrected, who ridicule theologians whenever they speak of demons, or attribute to demons any effects, as if these things were entirely fabulous. This error has arisen among some learned men, partly through want of faith, and partly through weakness and imperfection of intellect . . . for, as Plato says, to refer everything to the senses, and to be incapable of turning away from them, is the greatest impediment to truth” (Gerson). This is an exact delineation of the extent to which the belief in witchcraft is supported, as E. G. J. says, “by the whole



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stress of the Church of Rome's infallibility." The Holy Roman Church unquestionably does teach that there are devils, that these devils go about the world, that sometimes they have produced certain sensible effects in the world, and may do so still. The Church is often taken to task by Protestants for going beyond Scripture, but here she repeats simply what is set down in Scripture, no more, as that *the devil goeth about* (1 Pet. v. 8); that there are *spirits of devils doing signs* (Apoc. xvi. 14); that our Lord bade His Apostles, *In my name cast out devils* (Mark xvi. 17), as He did Himself continually, on one occasion sending them into swine (Mark v. 12); that the witch of Endor brought up for Saul the spirit of Samuel (1 Kings xxviii.). So the existence of devils, the possibility of dealing with devils, and the fact of diabolic possession, are things supported also by the whole stress of the infallibility of Holy Scripture. If a "profound scepticism on all matters connected with the Devil underlies the opinions of almost every educated man" (E. G. J.); such scepticism, applied not to this or that alleged piece of modern *diablerie*, but the very existence of the devil, or the possibility of his working in the world at all, is simple disbelief in the authority of Scripture. Beyond the express letter of Holy Scripture in this matter the teaching of the Catholic Church does not travel. It is an axiom in logic, *ab esse ad posse valet illatio*: the inference is valid from fact to possibility. The Gospel assures us that there were persons possessed by devils in our Lord's time; therefore diabolic possession is a possibility. The sin of witchcraft is often mentioned both in the Old and the New Testament: therefore there is such a sin, and you may come across a case of it.

But ever since the inspired record of the Bible was complete, that is, for these last eighteen centuries, the Church has never pronounced infallibly on the fact of any one case of witchcraft or of diabolic possession. It is open to a Catholic, without making shipwreck of his faith, to dispute or deny any story of witchcraft or possession that he finds in any history, or in any Saint's Life. Fur-

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thermore Catholics may avow, and in our days generally do avow, that numbers of innocent persons have been tortured and put to death on false charges of witchcraft, by bishops and priests, by lay tribunals, by Catholics, and also by Protestants : that many things in fact have been put down to diabolic agency, with which the devil had nothing to do, or haply, which never took place at all.

In this matter of diabolic action, mediæval Catholics were prone, as E. G. J. says, to expand premises that were furnished by the Church ; in which expansion they committed many errors in point of logic and of weighing of evidence, and perpetrated in blind haste many cruel deeds. Their conclusions were certainly not strictly drawn from the premises of authority. In our century men go about to expand premises furnished by science, and are equally illogical with their mediæval forefathers, equally peremptory and absolute, though not equally cruel. Science has explained much that our ancestors thought præternatural : it has not explained all. To argue that witchcraft never was, or is now extinct, is not science but temerity. Witchcraft has simply changed its name, and is now called Spiritualism. People who have lived in India tell strange stories of doings of native sorcerers, to which the Anglo-Indian, with his preconceived notions, resolutely shuts his eyes. We are very ignorant of what goes on in the lamaseries of Thibet. Doctors do not understand the phenomena of madness with anything like sufficient adequacy to pronounce that there are no cases now of diabolic possession. Of this probability also strange stories are told by priests, who are not altogether fools.

It remains to determine, if we may, why witchcraft is on the whole an unlikely crime in Western Europe at the present day. The explanation is not far to seek. To the minds of our generation, God is not the overwhelming present reality that He was in the ages of faith. We say of an atheist that he believes neither in God nor devil. We recognise that those two beliefs go together. And it is manifest that never, since the first preaching of Christianity, was the devil so little believed in or thought of as

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in our time. Men never think of dealing with a being, whose existence they scarcely realise, or perhaps utterly disbelieve. Just as blasphemy is a sin of Catholic countries, not of Protestant England, so is witchcraft a crime incident where there is firm faith in Unseen Powers ; it falls away with the decay of faith. There is some evil incident to every good : destroy the good, and you remove the evil. In a country where men know the articles of Catholic faith and believe in them intensely, while they have little other knowledge, any one who has lost hope in God and love of Him, and has become desperate in his fortunes, may be strongly tempted to turn for relief to God's enemy, the devil, if he has heard tell of any way in which that potentate may be approached. He knows who he is dealing with, and at what price, but like Faust he may be willing to pay it for present good. Still, as I have said, some form of witchcraft has prevailed, and may again prevail, away from Christianity and even away from Theism. Its votaries do not recognise the being with whom they deal : they call him good,—in fact, substitute him for God. Witchcraft and other superstitious practices are a sort of blight that settles upon true religion, but often also on false religions : indeed they may replace religion.

Our rationalist age, as such, believes no more in devils to hurt us, nor in angels to guard us : it has abolished witchcraft, and likewise prayer : it has drawn a veil over the mouth of hell, and hidden heaven in darkness : it has exorcised superstitious terrors, and dispelled eternal hopes : it has swept away from human vision the life of the world to come, all the awful sublimity, the cloud and the brightness, of that expectation.

## CONFERENCE XII : A DEFENCE OF THE SUBJECTIVE METHOD, WITH A REPLY

THE “subjective method” is patronised by too many able men to allow us to suppose that nothing can be said for it. I have before me a very specious line of defence, which I may be permitted to draw out as follows.

A LETTER FROM EDWARD GIBBON JUNIOR

January, 1, 1898.

Sir,—I feel amused rather than otherwise impressed by the vehement attack which you have seen fit to make on “the subjective method,” as you style it. That method is, as you should know, the master-key of knowledge, discovered by my venerable friend M. Auguste Comte. However, as you have afforded me some amusement, I am ready to furnish you in return with some justification of what you so ignorantly attack.

You are fond of enlarging on the impossibility of men generally arguing out their theological beliefs on intrinsic grounds. Scientific theology, you say, is too difficult for ordinary minds ; men must, therefore, have recourse to some Divine Teacher, in fact to the Catholic Church, and take her word about the things of God. I am happy to agree with you about this incapacity of ordinary mortals for making their own theology. They must go to school somewhere. But where ? To the *Zeitgeist*, I say, to the spirit of the times. They must find out what is thought by the best thinkers of their time, by the *πεπαιδευμένοι*, and they must hold by that, and make their act of faith in that, not as in something eternally true, but as the best truth to be had for the time. I make of the educated opinion of the day what you make of the Church. Educated Opinion, that is my Church. My Church, unlike yours, is not infallible, but it points to the nearest approach to



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truth yet made. Some centuries ago, Educated Opinion coincided with the Catholic Church. I should have been a Catholic myself in those days : it was the best thing then to be done. Now Educated Opinion has left the Catholic Church far behind.

Human testimony is set down in your philosophy books as one of the avenues to truth. What you nickname the subjective method, is nothing more than an acceptance of human testimony, the testimony of the most capable members of the race. It is faith in Humanity. As Humanity is a finite and fallible being, our faith in Humanity is not absolute, like your faith in God. Our Creed, unlike yours, is progressive, not fixed. We acknowledge it to contain crudities, blurred truths, if you like, even errors ; but these errors are the best approximations of mankind to truth so far, and the hour has not yet struck for going back upon them or recanting them.

We are not such fools as to deny objective truth in religion any more than in astronomy ; propositions about God, as propositions about the stars, must be either true and according to fact, or false and away from fact ; what we do deny is that humanity hitherto has obtained anything further than a tentative hold upon objective religious truth : therefore all our religious assents remain, for the present, provisional. Possibly they will never get any further. Mankind may have finally to acquiesce in the old saying, *ἐν βυθῷ ἡ ἀλήθεια* : religion is an abyss too deep for the human mind to fathom.

I am, sir, &c.,

E. G. J.

The following is my reply.

TO EDWARD GIBBON JUNIOR.

*February 6, 1898.*

Sir,—I too set great store by educated opinion and human testimony. When to be educated and to hold a particular opinion come to one and the same thing, that

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opinion, though not necessarily true, yet is almost irresistible for the time being : *e.g.*, the opinion that the Epistles of Phalaris are spurious, or that the divine right of kings, as held by James I, is an exaggeration, or that old St. Paul's was destroyed by fire in 1666. Where the testimony of competent judges, or competent witnesses, lies all one way, it can hardly be false. But where educated men are of different opinions, or testimonies contradict one another, *e.g.*, as to the absolute unlawfulness of mental reservation, or the guilt of Mary Queen of Scots, we cannot rest simply on authority : we must balance the conflicting authorities, or test the case on its own merits for ourselves. Now Educated Opinion is very far from pointing, as you assume, all one way in the things of religion. There are plenty of educated men still believers in some form of dogmatic Christianity. It will be said that they are prejudiced and committed to dogmatism. But is there no prejudice against dogma ? no preconceived and blindly maintained resolution that, whoever else is right, the upholders of any divine revelation must be wrong ?

Then again, Educated Opinion, to have any value, must be the opinion of men educated in the particular matter in dispute. The opinion of the Professor of Greek is of no value in a council of war, and may not be worth much in theology. To claim our respect, Educated Opinion on matters of religion should be the opinion of men who are Doctors of Theology, or some approach thereto. Biology is not theology ; even biblical erudition is not theology. In point of fact there is comparatively little theology outside the Christian pale. The *Zeitgeist* must not be taken in preference to the opinion of experts in navigation, in war, in finance : why in religion ?

If we wish to gather human testimony concerning religion, there is one great witness bearing such testimony which we must not neglect : I mean the Catholic Church. I say *human testimony*, because the Church, like her Founder, is human no less than divine. I am considering the human credibility, which attaches to her as to any other teaching body in the world. Suppose Socrates

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reappearing on earth, with his mind not advanced beyond the knowledge that he had of things that morning when he toyed with Phædo's hair, and advised him not to cut it short in sorrow for his dead master. Socrates goes about questioning in his old fashion,—I hope it would be taken better in London than at Athens ; he discovers Agnosticism in high places, but a good deal of religious belief there too ; and ere long he makes the discovery of the Catholic Church. Six months have elapsed ; the hemlock let us assume, has not been pounded for him again, nor have the doors of a lunatic asylum closed upon him ; the enquiring old man is called upon to conform to the religious views (*ἐννοίας*) of the Educated Mind at the end of the nineteenth century. *ποίας ἐννοίας, ὃ τᾶν* ; might be the beginning of the philosopher's reply. "What views, my dear sir ? Everywhere I find contradiction and doubt on religious matters, except among one body of men. Do you ask me to conform to the views of the Roman Catholic Church ? "

I am glad to see in your letter a departure from the subjective method pure and simple. You press the educated opinion of the day upon our acceptance, not as though its merit and condemnation consisted precisely in its being current and fashionable, but because educated men are the most trustworthy witnesses to fact. You admit that affirmations and denials in the matter of religion must be either in agreement or disagreement with things as they really and objectively are : consequently, that the true value of any such affirmation or denial in its consonance with objective fact.

Now, sir, Educated Opinion once held clear, definite views as to the future of the human soul after death, views which are still clung to by a multitude of educated men. It would be well to specify exactly what ground your Educated Opinion has discovered for departing from these views. It would be well to make sure, amid the uncertainty of all things else, whether that departure be quite safe ; whether possibly there be not some one position in religion which we shall all be glad (after death) to

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have held in preference to other positions,—or are we practically certain that death means for our consciousness final extinction and blank nothingness? The objective fact which answers to the enquiry, which ever way it lies, is a fact of the first magnitude, the basis, indeed, of all human deliberation about the higher ends of life. I cannot but think that you are treating this enquiry with too careless a hand.

I am, sir, &c.

To this correspondence I would add a few notes, which I number for clearness' sake.

1. The world, to be sure, has erected itself into a sort of Church, built not on a rock, but on a floating sand. This World-Church is highly pontifical, and launches anathemas freely. It has excommunicated the Pope and his adherents. It teaches an exclusive doctrine of Educated Opinion, vindicating itself the entire possession of that quality. Edward Gibbon Junior is wrong, however, in saying that his Church is not infallible: it does teach infallibly “the best truth to be had for the time,” “the nearest approach to truth yet made.” Such are the pretensions of this strange Church. But they are challenged by a powerful rival, and repudiated by millions of mankind. Therefore the voice of the World-Church cannot be taken for the voice of all Humanity, nor faith in her for faith in Humanity.

Neither, of course, can the Catholic Church speak with the voice of all Humanity. There is nothing more distressing to the faith of Catholics than the array of human intellect hostile to Catholicism. It is not the wealth of our adversaries and their splendid foundations that grieves us, but their mind, ability, and genius. This makes a difficulty, but not a doubt; for we question not that God has the solution with Himself. According to tradition, *a third part*, evidently some large portion, of the angelic intellects fell (Apoc. xii. 4). Still the Devil does not represent the Angels, nor does the World represent Humanity.

2. “Educated Opinion,” as it calls itself, used to be



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certain about some, even many, of the things of God : now it is uncertain of all. It even doubts whether there be a Personal God, and is strongly inclined to think not. Still it cannot pretend that the theories of Pantheism, in which it has taken refuge, are more intelligible, more credible, and hang together better than the old scholastic theology. It cannot deny that those theories, if one will follow them out unflinchingly, make havoc of all truth, even of the clearest convictions of the human mind ; that they extend the saying, *truth is lost in the depths*, over the province of theology and also of philosophy, over the axioms of mathematics and the higher reaches of physical science ; leaving us only the conclusions of what Carlyle called “ pig philosophy,” of which he gives the instance, “ ginger is hot.” In the realm of thought this Pantheism is a universal solvent.

3 By “ a Personal God ” I mean One of whom we may in some true sense predicate thought and will and consciousness of self,—a Being who can know and love us, and be angry with us when we do wrong,—a Being who is not unsusceptible, as all unconscious and impersonal being is unsusceptible, of the sweet appellation *Our Father*. This conception is scornfully termed “ anthropomorphic.” It would be just as effectual to call it “ hyperanaeschyntic ” or “ pachydermatous.” It would equally well serve the purpose of confounding the minds of the simple with a very little Greek. A Personal God is a Being “ in the form of man,” not on the animal side of man’s nature, as though God, as God, had hands and feet, but on his spiritual and mental side. God is like man, and man is like God, this likeness being, as the catechism teaches, “ not in my body, but in my soul,” as “ my soul is a spirit, has understanding and free will, and is immortal.” A Supreme Being, presiding over and distinct from the world, must be more like man, the highest creature of which we have experience, than like any other object in the world ; and He must resemble man, not in the inferior part of man’s nature, which he has in common with other animals, but in the attributes of mind and soul,

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which make man man. At the same time the Supreme Being must possess those attributes in an ineffably higher order. With this explanation, there is nothing irrational in calling our conception of God “anthropomorphic,” though to be sure that is not a usual term of Christian theology.

4. A Personal God is likely to keep an eye on man, to have a purpose and a mind about man, which He is able and ready to reveal; and *not* to have *left Himself without witness* (Acts xiv. 17).

5. Edward Gibbon Junior ignores the Incarnation and the revelation made in Christ. He throws us back upon habits of thought purely pagan and pre-Christian. Such thought animated Celsus against Origen; and Lucian and the Epicureans against the austere holiness of the Catacombs. Christianity was preached in the teeth of the educated opinion of the day, and triumphed over that opinion. Our Lord Himself was taunted with His opposition to Educated Opinion: *Hath any one of the rulers believed in him, or the Pharisees? but this crowd that knoweth not the law, &c.* (John viii. 48, 49). There is nothing new in the Letter. It has but the merit of an accurate statement of the eternal contradiction between the world and Christ (John xvii. 14, seq.).

## CONFERENCE XIII : POPE CONSCIENCE

**T**HE one merit and justification of dogma is its truth. It may be consoling, it may edify and build up the social order, it may be a stepping-stone to speculation, it may soften the heart and stir it to sympathy with distress,—but the grand reason for believing any dogma is not any of these merits, except in so far as they can be turned to evidence that the dogma is in accordance with the objective order of facts, or with things in themselves as they really are. On the other hand, a dogma may be very terrible and disquieting to many : it may be a call to obedience of intellect rather than to speculation : it may be a warning against much that is called progress, and mark it as going by large strides away from the safe path : and yet it may be our best course to accept that dogma, simply because it is true.

The most important dogma of all for our time, and the most questioned, is the dogma that God requires dogmas : that, while making allowance for ignorance and prejudice as an excuse in this as in other obligations, say, that of civil allegiance, He yet will not admit to His eternal Kingdom, but will condemn to eternal woe, men who have rejected dogmas fairly proposed to them, or who have remained grossly and culpably ignorant of such dogmas,—and that because, though they may have observed other points of morality, they have lived and died in one frightful sin and habitual violation of the natural law, the sin of pride and disobedience to their Creator, the sin of Lucifer, which made him of an angel a devil. This dogma, that God requires dogmas, lies at the root of Christianity, as we see it in the New Testament and in the history of the Catholic Church. It makes all the difference between Christianity and any philosophy. Christ is no mere reasoner, but Lord of the intellect. To be undogmatic is to be un-Christian.

## POPE CONSCIENCE

Protestantism means No Popery ; and that, logically followed out, means No Christianity. But the best abolition is a substitution. What shall we substitute for the Pope, for the dogmatic principle, for Christianity, for Church authority ? Doubtless, some respectable figure. If the substitute be not itself respectable, let it get a false name, let it wear stolen clothes. There is no name more honourable than the name of Conscience, no presence more commanding. Let this wicked antichrist call itself Conscience : let it stand up, an inward authority against all outward authority : let it usurp the tiara : open the doors of the Vatican for the new Pontiff to come forth : Pope Conscience is crowned.

I find two manifestoes of the policy of the new reign. However contradictory, I faithfully reproduce both, as one calendaring State Papers. The first manifesto is drawn by E. G. J., and runs as follows :

“The practical dethronement of the Pope [Leo, Pius, etc., up to Peter and Him who gave the keys to Peter] has followed the doctrine, that the only proper realm of religion is the conscience of the individual man.<sup>1</sup> Protestant Rationalism makes the moral faculty of man the measure and arbiter of faith. Its central conception is the elevation of conscience into a position of supreme authority as the religious organ, a verifying faculty discriminating between truth and error. It regards Christianity as designed to preside over the moral progress of mankind, as a conception which was to become more and more sublimated and spiritualised as the human mind passed into new phases, and was able to bear the splendour of a more unclouded light. In its eyes the moral element of Christianity is as the sun in heaven, and dogmatic systems as the clouds that intercept and temper the brightness of its ray.”

The other manifesto is from the pen of a Roman Cardinal.

“When men advocate the rights of conscience, they in no sense mean the rights of the Creator, nor the duty to Him, in thought and deed, of the creature, but the right

<sup>1</sup> This sentence appeared in a leader in *The Times*, in the autumn of 1879.



## POPE CONSCIENCE

of thinking, speaking, writing, and acting, according to their judgment or their humour, without any thought of God at all. They do not even pretend to go by any moral rule, but they demand, what they think is an Englishman's prerogative, for each to be his own master in all things, and to profess what he pleases, asking no one's leave, and accounting priest or preacher, speaker or writer, unutterably impertinent who dares to say a word against his going to perdition, if he likes it, in his own way. Conscience has rights because it has duties ; but in this age, with a large portion of the public, it is the very right and freedom of conscience to dispense with conscience, to ignore a Lawgiver and Judge, to be independent of unseen obligations. It becomes a license to take up any or no religion, to take up this or that, and let it go again, to go to church, to go to chapel, to boast of being above all religions, and to be an impartial critic of each of them. Conscience is a stern monitor, but in this century it has been superseded by a counterfeit, which the eighteen centuries prior to it never heard of, and could not have mistaken for it, if they had. It is the right of self-will."<sup>1</sup>

This second manifesto is one of those masterpieces, of which Aristotle says, nothing can be added to it, nothing taken from it.

Against the first manifesto I have a protest to enter : the psychology is at fault. Conscience is made a distinct faculty of the mind : whereas upon St. Thomas's showing (*Sum. Theol.* 1a, q. 79, artt. 11-13), conscience is not a distinct faculty, but is merely the intellect working upon a certain order of practical ideas. It is the judgment of the mind upon the course of life taken or to be taken. To say then that the moral faculty is the measure and arbiter of faith, is to say no more than that faith must be measured by human understanding, a saying not very new, not remarkably profound, and not exactly Scriptural. Indeed it is a resuscitation of what Protagoras taught at Athens, and Plato contradicted, πάντων μέτρον ἄνθρωπος, "man is the measure of all things,"—in other words,

<sup>1</sup> Newman, *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*, § 5, p. 250.

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“there is no superhuman Mind.” The elevation of conscience into a supreme authority is simply the elevation of the human intellect into that position, in spite of St. Paul’s *leading every understanding captive to the obedience of faith* (2 Cor. x. 5). It appears we have got an infallible Mentor at home, not His Grace at Lambeth,—the Archbishop of Canterbury is no more needed than the Roman Bishop : the seat and see of infallibility is in the heart of every man, where Conscience dwells. And as Conscience after all is only a human faculty, and what that faculty does the man is rightly said to do, according to Aristotle, it follows that every man is his own infallible Pope. This is the Protestant principle of Individualism carried to the utmost : it supersedes Pope, Church, and Bible. It comes to this, that whatever any man thinks in religion and morality is true for him, though not of course for his neighbours, who all think differently.

Conscience however is not infallible, nor the individual man. Conscience needs educating, as he does. There is greater need of education of the conscience than of any other intellectual formation. Man has to learn his duties as he learns the principles of health, the laws of mechanics, the theorems of geometry, the conditions of safety in coach-building, or any other art or science. And he is just as likely to go wrong, and has gone wrong as grievously, in his judgments on moral matters as on any other subject of human knowledge. The peculiarity of conscience is that man is bound to get himself educated in that department. He is bound to learn his duties as man, what is right and what is wrong.<sup>1</sup> He is not bound to learn other arts and sciences. Another peculiarity is that if, having done what in him lay to get his conscience educated aright, his conscience after all is in error, he does right in following that erroneous conscience,—nay, he is bound to follow it. So St. Thomas, *Summa*, Ia 2æ, q. 19, artt. 5, 6 (*Aquinas Ethicus*, I. 67-72). I quote some of his words :—“If therefore reason or conscience errs

<sup>1</sup> “‘Illuminate,’ or ‘instruct your conscience,’ is quite as essential a rule as ‘follow your conscience.’”—Dr. Thomas Fowler.

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with an error that is voluntary, either directly, or indirectly through negligence, being an error touching that which one is bound to know, then such an error of reason or conscience does not excuse a man, and a will in agreement with a reason or conscience so erring is evil. But if it be such an error as to make the act involuntary; if it be ignorance of some circumstance, an ignorance not due to negligence; that error of reason or conscience excuses a man, and a will in accordance with such an erroneous reason is not evil." St. Thomas is far enough from proclaiming the individual conscience infallible, omniscient, and self-sufficient, either for duties of this world, or for duties towards God and religion.

Conscience again is not Pope, for it is not an external authority, and the Pope is an external authority, like the Commander-in-Chief. Or we may compare the Pope and the Pastors of the Church under him to the signal-men on a railway. Their presence and the signals that they display by no means dispense with the quality of eyesight in the driver of a train: on the contrary, they appeal precisely to that quality, and (omitting fog-signals) could do nothing with a blind driver. So the Pope appeals to the consciences of Catholics. His guidance is rejected by the unconscientious among them. It is part of the conscientious care of Catholics, believing as they do that their pastors are set by God for their guidance on the way to heaven, to accommodate thought and action to this guidance: no other behaviour do they consider safe or right. They run by their signals, as do the drivers on the railway. They may wonder at a particular signal being up, see no reason for it and sundry reasons against it, feel the inconvenience and annoyance of being thus checked in their course: but they know it is never safe to disobey the signal, and they do obey it accordingly. This is not a putting out of eyes, or an abandonment of conscience, it is having one's eyes and one's conscience guided,—guidance most necessary in the conflicting ways of life; guidance afforded by God, who is the author of these ways, and knows them as we never can.

## CONFERENCE XIV : DOGMA AND DISCIPLINE

“**N**O one system of belief can be adapted to the requirements of all men,” says E. G. J. Very much the same idea inspired the celebrated electioneering address : “ These are my principles, gentlemen, but if they don’t suit you, they can be changed.” We are not then to believe a doctrine, or hold a principle, because it is true, but because it suits us, and is adapted to our requirements,—a good illustration of the “ subjective method.” It would of course be absurd to apply this method to any practical matter, like war, engineering, finance, politics, medicine. The feasibility of a plan of campaign, the stability of a bridge, the solvency of a company, the issue of an alliance, the effect of a drug, are to be determined, not by personal prejudices and predispositions, but by the objective evidence of fact forthcoming in each case. Wherever we are roused to think the matter in hand to be one of life and death to ourselves, we discard our predilections, and go after the objective evidence of fact. Only when we turn our thoughts to our Creator and Lord and Judge, and to the will of God about us, and to the Being of God in Himself, and the history of God’s dealings with mankind, and to the fortunes of our own soul after death, hovering between happiness and misery everlasting,—only in this region of immensities and eternities are we content to believe anything we list, to pillow our heads on an opinion because it is soft and downy and soothing, while we view with equanimity and indifference our neighbour believing the very opposite. This means the relegation of religion from the field of knowledge to the undebatable ground of emotions and tastes. It means the making God a Being to dream of, not to know, still less to fear, serve, reverence, obey. It means the doing away with the personality of the Divine Being : for a God who is Master and Lord of all is not



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likely to acquiesce in being merely dreamt of, in being honoured or ignored, as the humour seizes men and their convenience dictates. A Personal God must assert Himself. He will not be put off on the plea that He is not wanted here, and is *de trop* there ; or that Catholic Christianity, the one system of belief in Him, as He has shown Himself in nature and revealed Himself in Christ, “ cannot be adapted to the requirements of all men ” ; or again, as Cardinal Newman put it, “ that Religion was nothing beyond a *supply* of the wants of human nature, not an external fact and a work of God.” <sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, substitute for God an impersonal Idea, or Absolute, and religion becomes at once a vague, creedless emotion, to be indulged according to each man’s caprice, or humour, or whim, or what he is pleased to call his “ conscience.” Only, be it observed, such use of the word *conscience* is a misnomer. There is no moral obligation in question. Though Pantheism be true, no one is morally bound to believe in Pantheism, any more than in gravitation. There is no present Majesty of Heaven about “ the Idea,” or “ the Absolute,” or about “ Humanity.” Flout the Idea, and it cannot be angry with you ; contradict the Absolute, and you do it no wrong. Pantheism is the one theology that is ready to accommodate itself to every man’s subjective state of mind, to allow every man to be his own pope, and in some sense his own god. If Protestantism has shown a proclivity in the same direction, it is because there is a secret logical connection traceable between Protestantism and Pantheism, in this that they both ignore the immeasurable height by which the Creator is exalted above the creature. <sup>2</sup> To the true Protestant, God is a sort of world-spirit, varying in various ages and among different nations, and falling in with the private judgment of every individual man. To the Protestant,—the thorough-going and persistent Protestant, I mean,—nothing is true in religion except what the individual chooses to think ; and that much is true only for

<sup>1</sup> Newman on the *Idea of a University* : *Theology a branch of knowledge*, n. 4.

<sup>2</sup> See an article to this effect in the *Dublin Review* for July, 1897.

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him who thinks so, and for as many others as choose to agree with him ; but there is no standard of religious truth that can be enforced upon all men everywhere and always. This Protestant habit of mind is radically pantheistic. The Protestant mind gets uneasy, if ever it meditates such utterances as : *Go teach* (μαθητεύσατε, *make disciples of*) *all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : he that believeth not, shall be condemned : he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the anger of God remaineth upon him* (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20 ; Mark xvi. 16 ; John iii. 36). These are sayings of a personal God. They are divine requirements, to which a thing so sacred as even " the requirements of all men " must give way.

What then are we to make of those oft-quoted lines of Tennyson ?—

The old order changes, giving place to new ;  
And God reveals Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

We must say, in the words of a famous character, " The point of that remark lies in its application." They are lines of thought and beauty and truth ; but their truth, like other truth couched in poetry, is difficult to lay hold of aright, and may readily be misapprehended. We see them put forward for a sort of last rampart of Anglicanism, as though, however excellent be the Catholic and Roman faith, and however superior to all other faiths, yet God could not have meant one faith and one religious obedience to claim the sole allegiance of all mankind : just fancy the whole of London Roman Catholic. Therefore God is supposed to reveal Himself in many ways, at St. Paul's, at the Oratory, at the City Temple, at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, at the New Jerusalem. But surely not in many contradictory ways, that there should be with Him *It is* and *It is not* (2 Cor. i. 17). And the doctrines in these several places are in contradiction one with another.

But there is a certain amount of agreement, is there not, upon such points as the odiousness of sin, the justice

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of God, the forgiveness of sin through Christ ? All these points, we reply, are taught by the Catholic Church definitely and practically, as no other body teaches them. Elsewhere this "our common Christianity" melts away into a mist. Where else, except indeed in that portion of the Anglican Body which copies Catholic doctrine most closely, have you any clear conception of the divine method of forgiveness of sin ? But now suppose a new place of worship opened, and in its precincts the doctrine of Christ's atonement is denied,—a mosque, for instance. Shall we pare down still further our little core of divine revelation, so as to be able to say that God reveals Himself in the mosque equally with the other places, or allow that God reveals Himself less in this place than in the others ? The second is the more reasonable alternative, or we may soon have no divine revelation left. But see where this leads to. We travel upwards from the New Jerusalem (Argyle Square, King's Cross) to St. Paul's. We have no right to stop short at the New Jerusalem, as though Swedenborgianism represented the highest level of divine truth made known to man, or the Church of England teaching at St. Paul's either. Where is the fulness of divine revelation ? That we are bound to seek.

Here are two rival verses to match Tennyson. I give them, not for the poetry, but for the truth that is in them.

And Satan hides himself in varied guise,  
Lest one mere error should alarm the world.

Everywhere he denies as much Catholic truth as he dare ; everywhere he puts in as many negations of the Christian revelation as the congregation will stand. But he must set bounds to his lying, and let some true teaching remain, or the lie will not go down ; and men will flock to the Catholic Church as alone teaching any of Christ's truth, as alone Christian, alone Theistic. This would never do ; it would never suit Satan to have the whole strength of Christianity and of Theism manifestly vested in the Catholic Church. So he sets up many Christianities and many Theisms, all of them tainted with

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some tinge of Satanic error, all except one, which he has not set up, and endeavours to lead all the rest to join in hating, an endeavour not unattended with success.

God permits this operation of Satan, and even turns it to good. It may be—we cannot tell—the salvation of many souls that they have a hold only on a portion of Catholic truth : they might not live up to the full *truth as it is in Jesus* (Eph. iv. 21), if they were possessed of it : in that case He would be to their *ruin*, not to their *resurrection* (Luke ii, 34). God gives men such truth as they *can bear* (John xvi. 12). To Catholics He distributes, by the hands of His apostles and their successors, whole *loaves* of truth : for the rest there are *twelve baskets of fragments left over* from the Catholic feast, *that every man may take a little* (John vi. 7-13). He will save every man who makes faithful use of the fragment that falls within his reach : still He *wishes all men to be saved and come to the full knowledge of the truth* (1 Tim. ii. 4). Whole and not fragmentary knowledge of Christ's message to mankind is the ordinary and normal means of salvation. Therefore He commissioned His apostles : *teach them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you* (Matt. xxviii. 20) : and St. Paul records his own fidelity to his commission : *I have not held back from announcing to you the whole counsel of God* (Acts xx. 27). Hence a twofold duty, a duty of the preacher in the Catholic Church, and a duty of every man who hears him. It is the duty of the preacher to put forth and insist upon all the truths that Christ our Lord has revealed to the Church : and it is the duty of every man who hears to accept all those truths, every one of them. If he refuses so much as one, he impugns the authority that teaches them all ; and incurs the malediction, *he that believeth not shall be condemned* (Mark xvi. 16). Understand, I speak of the man whose eyes are open to his position in this matter before God. Every such man is bound to embrace the fulness of Christian revelation, where alone such fulness is found, in the Catholic and Roman Church, and outside that Church he will find no salvation.



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Even, however, in the Catholic Church belief must suffer refraction according to the various minds that receive it, learned and ignorant, civilised and barbarous, oriental and western. Thus the unity of Catholic faith emerges and comes out in varied forms of devotion, Italian, English, Irish, French, or Swiss. The Church by no means insists on one good custom, but simply on one true faith, catholic and universal. Customs, or discipline, the Church divides into essential and accidental : in the latter she is able to allow endless variety. So, we may say, justice and cleanliness are essentials of British civilisation : we insist on them, to the best of our power, all the world over. In other matters we grant and even enforce a generous liberty to differ.

Again, Catholic doctrine may and must be delivered in greater or less abundance to suit the requirements, or rather the capacities, of various persons under instruction. *I have still many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now*, said our Lord (John xvi. 12) ; and St. Paul : *I fed you with milk, not with solid food, for ye were not yet capable : but we speak wisdom among the perfect* (1 Cor. iii. 2 ; ii. 6). There is a process of development and unfolding of Christian doctrine going on both in the mind of the individual Christian, as his formation in Christ progresses, and also in the mind of the Universal Church from one age to another. But in this process there is no turning back and recanting, no denial and casting off of articles once held on faith. Moreover, the essentials of faith are clear and defined for all time, and can be conveyed, and are conveyed daily, into minds of very limited capacity. In this the gospel differs from philosophy, and even from the science of theology. Philosophy and theology are for the educated few ; the gospel is for the multitude, for the poor.

There are in the Church *credenda* and *agenda*, things to believe and things to do ; in other words, doctrine and discipline. With regard to doctrine, the Church has only the power of a herald to *proclaim* (κηρύττειν, the original word for *to preach*). She cannot alter the matter

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of the proclamation put in her mouth by Christ and His Holy Spirit. She has nothing to unsay. She can only say more fully and completely what she has always said. It is otherwise with her discipline. The foundations of her discipline are the natural moral law, and over that she has no power, except to proclaim it in her pulpits, and enforce it in her spiritual tribunals : also certain enactments of Christ Himself touching the sacraments, their matter and form, and touching the hierarchical constitution of the Church,—these enactments she can but stand by and obey. Over and above these foundations is superimposed a vast body of laws and customs, making up what is commonly understood by the discipline of the Church. Here the Church is no longer herald, she is lawgiver. She made these laws, and she can abolish them. It is the discipline, not the doctrine of the Church, that can be altered to meet local and temporal exigencies. And it may be said with a fair measure of truth that no one system of discipline can be adapted to the requirements of all men.

## CONFERENCE XV. : THE CHRISTIAN A RATIONAL IDEAL.

**I**F we consider that conscience is not a distinct faculty from reason, but is merely reason working on peculiar ground, we see that to be conscientious is to be reasonable ; and clearly Christianity goes to make us conscientious. Again, the moral law is the law of right reason, and Christianity enforces the moral law. The moral law directs that we should not be fools, nor beasts either. It warns us against spiritual sins and against sensual sins, against pride and licentiousness. It inculcates humility and purity : humility, that we should take and act upon a right view of ourselves, holding ourselves for such as we really are and no more, before God and our fellow-men : purity, that we should have our bodily appetites under command. That view is the view of reason, and that command is the command of reason. And Christianity aids reason in maintaining that view and exercising that command. Christianity goes to make us humble and pure, and so far forth, rational.

The aid is needed. Some machinery will work automatically for a time, without a man to tend it, as clock-work : but only for a time, and only in a limited sphere of usefulness : you cannot run an Atlantic liner by clock-work. The noblest machinery needs the constant attention of man. The mind of man secures the machinery working, as we may say, reasonably, safely, and according to its purpose : it prevents the locomotive from burying itself in the embankment, and the steamship from rushing upon the rocks. And the Christian faith and the grace of Christ comes to the aid of reason, to make reason on the one hand modest and sober, cautious, and aware of its own limited capacity for dealing with the immensities of truth ; and on the other hand to steady and confirm it in its command over appetite. Without the divine guidance that

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Christianity affords, reason has luxuriated and run wild ; it has lost itself in extravagance, it has been blinded by sensuality, it has sometimes despaired of all higher truth.

The Christian has his *conversation*, or citizenship, *in heaven* (Phil. iii. 20) : at the same time he is, or should be, a shrewd, sober-minded, cool-headed, sensible denizen of earth. This you know from your own experience. If any one recommended to you a person as being exceedingly silly, “ a perfect ass,” and therefore a fit and proper person to become a Catholic, you might reply that his approaches to the Catholic Church would probably be only another of his follies ; that you should expect him lightly to take up Catholicity and as lightly to fling it down again. Silly clerics are not wanted for the sanctuary, nor silly novices for religious orders. When a Catholic wants to shake himself loose from folly, to have his intellect bright, and his judgment sober, and his whole mind at peace, for the purpose of an important examination or a great decision in life, you know what he will do, what you yourselves would do,—approach the Sacraments, which it is your privilege as Catholics to approach, of Confession and Holy Communion. It is a way to quicken, or I may say, to *mobilise* your reasoning powers, and give you the full use of them. Persons who have had experience of retreats will tell you that they never feel so entirely rational as when for some days they have been looking away from the things of the world hard at the things of eternity, under the guidance of Holy Church.

Or consider the utter unreason and blind stupidity of many of the attacks upon the Catholic Church, those of the Protestant Alliance for instance. To enforce upon such assailants the ordinary laws of evidence is to crush them. A great part of our work in England is battling against foolish prejudice, the legion of phantoms and fables which beset the minds of our countrymen, when they have to deal with the Catholic Church, follies which confound their otherwise clear judgments, and bias their minds, usually so fair and open. But we must confess that Catholics have their prejudices too. It is no prejudice, but sound



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Catholic faith, to extol the Catholic Church above every other religion. But to be ready to believe all evil of those who are not Catholics is not sound Catholicism ; it is forgetfulness of the Christian lesson, not lightly to believe evil of your neighbour. Stories do reach us at times from a distance about Protestants, Jews, Freemasons, and other such anticatholic bodies, scarcely less absurd than the fables of the Protestant Alliance. We are not arguing that all Catholics are reasonable, or that we ourselves behave reasonably in all or most of the occurrences of life : only that the ideal which we have before us as Christians and Catholics is an ideal of conduct regulated by reason,—by something more indeed than mere reason, but not subversive of reason, rather confirmatory of it. If I were asked what *natural* means would most aid the return of England to the ancient faith, I should be tempted to reply, “ If every Englishman were well drilled in logic, and,” I might add, “ in the real facts of history.” Bad reasoning and perversion of history are two most doughty champions of all that is anticatholic.

I fancy I hear some one exclaim : “ Oh but I know some holy people, and they are such oddities and such simpletons : then look at the horrid excesses that we read of in the Lives of the Saints : it really does look as though one could not be a Saint, or very holy, without parting with his reason.”<sup>1</sup> I should wish to consider the case of the Saints apart from the rest : a Saint, canonised or canonisable, is something indefinitely higher than an ordinary holy person. About ordinary holy persons I would observe that holiness has the property of intensifying all a man’s activities that are not sinful, and throwing all his attributes into strong relief. Thus his whims and peculiarities get intensified with the rest. The holy man is dogged and obstinate, intense and earnest, in his whims as in his devotions. Like Brutus, whatever he wills, he wills strongly. Thus his whims become amusing and laughable to those who know him, all the more so because of the

<sup>1</sup> “ Here is a Saint, and what must he do but practise eccentricities ? ” Newman, *Mixed Congregations*, p. 313.

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contrast with the rest of his noble and serious character, and the respect which that character inspires. But a few oddities do not make a man fundamentally silly. Ignorance of the ways of the world may come of no defect of reason, but of a somewhat too exclusive attention to higher and better things. A man may be called a simpleton for showing such ignorance, and yet be anything but a shallow mind. Show me a real silly, wrong-headed man, and I will answer for it, that there is not much of Christian asceticism in his character : he is no subject for such spiritual training. It is a received maxim among ascetic writers, that whatever perturbs and disorders the reason, whatever savours of giddiness and flightiness, whatever is fantastic, bizarre, tending to cerebral excitement and beyond that to insanity, bears upon it the stamp of the Evil Spirit ; such is not the work of God the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier.

Of the Saints I may only say here that in reading the Life of a canonised Saint we must ever bear in mind that he was united with God and borne up by God as other even holy men are not : that in such divine union and with such divine support certain audacities were reasonable in him, which in ordinary Christians would be "horrid excesses" : that the Saints are *fools for Christ's sake*, such folly being in them the highest wisdom, while Christians of humbler mould are fain to be content with being *prudent in Christ* (1 Cor. iv. 10). A story may make this distinction clear. You know that a simple priest gives the blessing with one sign of the cross, a Bishop with three. A Bishop once noticed one of his priests giving the blessing in episcopal form. "You should not make three signs of the cross," he said to him afterwards. "Why, my lord," was the priest's answer, "I saw you do it yourself." Certain ceremonies are rubrical only in a Bishop, and certain conduct is rational only in a Saint. But even the Saints, when the divine afflatus was not specially upon them, walked steadily and patiently in the ways of common sense. Witness the great founders of Orders. I never can take up the Life of St. Teresa, or read her writings, without thinking : "For all her ecstasies, did ever more

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sensible woman live ? ” St. Aloysius showed great tact and business capacity in settling a family dispute. Depend upon it, no Saint was ever either a coward, or a sluggard, or a fool.

St. Ignatius describes the working of the Spirit of God as rendering the soul quiet and pacifying it in its Creator and Lord.<sup>1</sup> The motto of the sons of St. Benedict is *Pax*, peace with God, and the pacific empire of grace and reason within the soul. Many of our Lord's miracles symbolise the same lesson. Under diabolic influence we read of a man : *He foameth at the mouth, and gnasbeth his teeth, and oft he falleth into the fire and into the water.*<sup>2</sup> And of another : *Night and day he was among the tombs, and on the hills, crying out and beating himself with stones.* But after contact with Our Saviour the same man is found *seated, clothed, and in his right mind.*<sup>3</sup> Perhaps too we can testify to the fulfilment in our own souls of the prophecy of Michæas, repeated by the Church in one of the Responses for the Third Sunday in Advent, *Et pax erit in terra nostra dum venerit.*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *De motibus animæ*, reg. 3

<sup>2</sup> Mark, ix. 19; Matt. xvii. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Mark, v. 5, 15.

<sup>4</sup> Resp. 2. ad mat. (adapted from Mich. v. 5).

## CONFERENCE XVI: THE CHRISTIAN AN HEROIC IDEAL

THE notion that I wish you to carry away this morning is that the standard set before the Christian man is glorious, inasmuch as it calls for heroism at times : there should be a dash of heroism in every Christian character. I always feel a certain respect for any soldier that I meet. There is a man, I say to myself, whose uniform proclaims him ready to march where death awaits him. So is every Christian bound to die for his faith, when his faith is put to that trial. As Cardinal Newman says, in the days of persecution it was not so much the great and learned, it was the ordinary rank and file of the Christian army, who died martyrs. And short of death, the Christian is bound to make any other sacrifice, however costly, for the confession of his faith and the observance of the commandments. He is bound to forgive, that is, to dismiss all personal rancour from his will, however much he may be injured or insulted. He is bound to refuse high emolument, when it can only be bought by the repudiation of Catholic faith or practice. He is bound to observe the marriage laws, whether of nature, as taught by the Church, or the positive enactments of the Church herself : this matter is often a great touchstone of Catholic fidelity. It is true that heroism is not usually demanded of us under pain of mortal sin except incidentally by a deviation from the normal course of things, and particularly by the perverse will of people about us, as persecutors, tempters, and the like ; but deviations are not unfrequent, and perverse wills are many and manifold. Even where heroism is not an obligation, it is often a strong counsel. I have had occasion at times to say to people : " There is one way out of your difficulties : take the heroic course : if you do not, your troubles will haunt you perpetually." In one sense the whole of Christian



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life is heroic : it is impossible to "flesh and blood." The natural determination and energy which turn you into a great athlete, or carry you successful through an examination, will not enable you to lead a life of faith, hope, and charity, and save your soul. That you cannot do without the special assistance of God, called grace.

To animate us to this heroism we have the encouragement of a great tradition. There is a tradition in the Universities, there is a tradition in the army and navy. A great tradition, wherever it has been accumulated, works to keep up the life of the present generation to the height of some eminence attained in the past. The evil of a revolution is that, being a rupture of continuity, it breaks off these great and noble traditions. The new government "knows not Joseph"; it is not of the lineage of David. We may point to one great European nation, suffering at this moment cruelly for having obliterated traditions of ancient majesty. An element of the strength of Great Britain is the tradition of nearly seven centuries since Magna Charta. The Roman Empire, enfeebled by internal decay, and shaken by strong assaults from without, still stood, putting off the evil day of its fall in the strength of its mighty tradition. The tradition of the Church is written in the lives of the Saints. The Church has created her own order of posthumous nobility by the process of Canonisation. There is no honour on earth like the honour of being a canonised Saint. To attain it, it is necessary to have practised all Christian virtue in an heroic degree, and to have one's final perseverance in good attested by miracles wrought after death. The lives of the Saints do not teach us literally what we should do, for we have not the graces that they had; and the attempt to reproduce their high actions without their high graces would be a failure and a folly. We should not rise to pray by night, as Luigi Gonzaga did, and insist on praying on, hour after hour, in the darkness, till we had prayed for one whole hour without a distraction. The action is not for us, but the spirit of the action. It is a spirit of heroic devotedness to the worship of God. When we have imbibed some-

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thing of that spirit, we shall not hesitate to rise in time to say our morning prayers, and to cut short some amusement, or conversation, or novel-reading, lest night prayers become an impossibility. There is no approaching the Sacraments with any frequency or regularity without frequent and regular self-denial to find the time requisite. This is just the dash of heroism of which I am inculcating the necessity.

I have long been struck with one bright example in the life of Blessed Thomas More, of sudden heroism breaking out like a flame from the sober grey sky of every-day Christian goodness. It was the 13th day of April, 1534. The new oath was ready, declaring at once the royal succession in the line of Anne Boleyn, and the independence of the Crown and Kingdom and Church of England of the Holy See. The parish priests of the neighbourhood of London were called upon to take the oath. I am ashamed to say that they crowded up to Lambeth, and swore away their fealty to the Pope by the score. One layman was called upon, the late Lord Chancellor, Sir Thomas More. His oath was reckoned to be as honourable as a priest's ; and besides, there was no such legal expert in the kingdom. Sir Thomas stood at the bar of the Council, before Cranmer and Audley and Cromwell. The oath of succession he was ready to take : he thought that Parliament had power to alter the succession. But for the ecclesiastical portion of the oath he said : " I blame no other man's conscience, if he swear : but I find it not in my conscience to take this oath." That night Sir Thomas was detained, an unwilling guest, at Lambeth Palace. Thence he was sent to the Tower and to martyrdom. It was not his first refusal. On the 6th of March he had refused the same oath. They let him go that time in his boat up the river back to his home at Chelsea. By the way he was very merry ; and walking that evening in his garden with his son-in-law Roper : " Wilt thou know, son Roper, why I was so merry ? In good faith I rejoiced that I had given the devil a foul fall, and that with those lords I had gone so far as, without great shame, I could never go back

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again." So the model of English laymen grasped the martyr's palm. The hour for heroism came; and by God's grace he was ready, when others were not.<sup>1</sup>

In speaking of the glorious ideal of the Christian man, I have had in mind throughout the grand Pauline discourse on *faith*, and the *great cloud of witnesses* to the faith, and *Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who endured the cross and despised the shame*. Read Hebrews xi. 1 to xii. 2. "Pauline" I call the passage, because, from whatever inspired pen it proceeded, it expresses the very core of St. Paul's thought and teaching. Faith is a *footing gained*, a *present embodiment* (ὑπόστασις, xi. 1) of *things hoped for*. That which is *unseen*, it *argues to be*. By faith we resist the tyranny and preponderating influence of visible things, knowing them to have been drawn out of nothingness by the invisible power of God (xi. 3). Enoch walked with God by faith and was well-pleasing to Him, till God took him to Himself in an extraordinary manner (xi. 5, 6). By an heroic exercise of faith Noe built his ark, amid the scoffs of a generation who thought his labour thrown away (xi. 7). In faith, at God's call, Abraham went out of his country, and lived a wanderer in the land that God promised him, centuries before his posterity came to possess it. In the same faith lived Isaac and Jacob, pilgrims on earth, looking for the promised land. Hence God was not ashamed to be called the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob (xi. 8, 9, 13-16; cf. Luke xx. 37). By faith Abraham was ready to offer up Isaac, the heir of the promises (xi. 17-19). By faith Joseph, dying, gave commandment for the carrying of his bones, when the children of Israel should leave Egypt, and their interment in the land that God had promised to give to Israel (xi. 22). By faith Moses threw in his lot with his people, rather than with Pharaoh's court, and quitted Egypt at their head, for *he endured as seeing the invisible*, words which are an apt epitome of the life of every Christian faithful man (xi. 24-27). By faith the saints subdued kingdoms,

<sup>1</sup> See Father Bridgett's *Life of Sir Thomas More*, ed. 2, pp. 341, 351, 353, 354. There is no better illustration of my theme than the martyr's interview with his daughter in the Tower, pp. 373, 374.

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and did other miracles (xi. 33, 34, 35) : by faith not less heroic they made trial of mockings and scourgings, and all manner of hardship (xi. 35-38). This is an incomplete catalogue, embracing only those ante-dated Christians, the saints of the Old Law. We should add now St. Peter and St. Paul himself, St. Stephen and St. Lawrence, the Apostles and Martyrs ; St. Agnes and St. Cecily, and the troop of Virgin Martyrs ; St. John Chrysostom and St. Gregory and the Doctors of the Church ; St. Benedict and the Founders of the Religious Orders ; the Martyrs of Japan and of England ; St. Catherine of Siena and St. Teresa, and St. Philip Neri and St. Vincent of Paul. Even so the catalogue remains incomplete. It will only be completed by the addition of the great Saints and Martyrs of the last days, the precursors of the King in judgment.

The spirit of the martyrs is in every sound Christian heart. Without it, religion is only a plaything and a conventionality for Sundays.



## CONFERENCE XVII: THE CHRISTIAN AN HISTORICAL IDEAL

CHRISTIANITY has wrought certain vast effects upon the character of men, upon their conduct, and upon the development of nations. It has entered the field of history and become an important part of the study of the historian. There was a controversy in the days of St. Augustine, and his great work *De Civitate Dei* was written as a contribution to that controversy, whether true religion should not help to the prosperity of an empire, and whether Christianity had so helped, or whether rather it had not stood in the way, and proved the ruin of at least one great empire. There is a very wise remark in Mill's *Logic*,<sup>1</sup> to the effect that in the sciences of Medicine and Sociology, sciences which regard the well-being of the natural body of the individual or of the moral body politic, induction by accumulation of instances is an exceedingly fallacious process. The reason is the great multitude of the causes at work, so that the same effect may be produced in the first instance by one cause, in the second instance by another, in the third instance by a third, and in none of the instances by a certain fourth cause to which you fondly attribute it in them all. It may even be that the fourth cause all along has been positively acting against that effect. Instances are not wholly without their value, but we should rather analyse the nature of each cause separately, and thence deduce the effect that may be expected of it. Thus we should expect natural virtue, such as justice and fortitude, to tell in favour of national prosperity, and true religion to be a support to natural virtue. But false religion also, even in its very falsity, may help on to empire. One element of the success of the early Mohammedan conquerors was the indifference of their soldiers to death. That was brought about by the

<sup>1</sup> In the chapter on the Experimental Methods.

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belief in which they had been nurtured, that whoever died fighting for the Prophet's cause was sure of heaven, which meant to them an everlasting round of sensual gratifications.

When we come to examine the phrase "national prosperity," we find that two different meanings may be hidden away under it. It may mean the growth of empire, the multiplication of colonies and trading-stations, the accumulation of wealth, large cities, a great inheritance of naval and military prestige and power. Or it may mean the abolition of squalid poverty, of brutality, of flagrant public sin ; it may mean a general level of contentedness and cheerfulness, even upon not a large fortune ; it may mean peace and amity among the classes, with a general diminution of crime and misery. The latter I may call *social* prosperity ; the former, *imperial* prosperity. The two are largely inter-dependent, still they are distinct. No one, I think, will maintain that imperial prosperity varies *directly* with the amount of true religion among the people. The most that can be urged is that it varies *jointly* with that and perhaps a score of other different factors. Hence in a particular case it is difficult to argue the truth of a nation's religion from the greatness of their empire. Religion will be more potent in determining *social* prosperity. From what I am about to say of the effects of Christianity upon character, it will be apparent that in social progress rather than in the making of empires can we trace the beneficent workings of the religion of Christ our Saviour.

The " empire-making virtues," as we may call them, are not the formal and precise results which supernatural religion looks for in the human heart. Greed of gain and territory is not the breath of the Gospel. Capacity of ruling barbarous subjects, perseverance under military and political difficulties, that *mens æqua in arduis* which Warren Hastings proposed to himself as his motto, has no necessary connection with Christianity. Christianity curbs, chastens, and softens man rather than excites him : its strength is the strength of endurance rather

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than attack. On the other hand, the acquisition of empire is not inconsistent with Christianity, not even with Catholic Christianity. There was no British Empire before the Reformation, but there was the Spanish Empire in vigorous growth. Where was the British Empire, or what the influence of England in Europe, in the reign of James I.? And if the Spanish Empire declined in the eighteenth century, was that by Spain becoming more Catholic? Spain, like France, was rather decatholicised in the eighteenth century.

Leaving these uncertainties, I will remind you that to us Christianity means Catholicism. The betterment of men's minds by Christian influences, whatever betterment there has been, is the glory of the Catholic Church. We acknowledge and praise the good done by baptized men of other communions, who would be horrified, some of them, at seeing themselves and their good deeds claimed by the Roman Catholic Church as hers. Did we not believe hopefully and sympathetically in good men and good deeds to be found outside the visible Catholic pale,—did we not recognise the workings of the Spirit of God among men not in visible communion with the Holy See, leading them nearer to that communion,—England and an English University would be a dismal and deplorable place to live in, spiritually considered. But, we say, whatever good these men have done they have done it on Catholic lines, by virtue of the remnant of Catholic principle still left to them. The *No Popery* element in their souls has been sterile of good, and must be sterile, except in the way that the persecutor's sword has produced good, unintentionally, in the Church. The good that they have done rouses us to emulation; it is no inducement to us to join them. We are satisfied to belong to the great parent stock, from which all other Christianities have gone forth, and to which, perhaps, in God's merciful providence, they are all destined to return. They have gone forth carrying with them severally certain fragments of blessings which have remained with us in their entirety. We have no mind to exchange the integer for the fraction,

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the whole for the part. The Anglican Eucharist, the blest bread and wine, reckoned to sanctify the soul and to engender Christ there, like the water of Baptism and the chrism of Confirmation, is not the bread on which we wish to feed, for we have a better. The Anglican spiritual adviser,—we do not need him either, we know where to go for spiritual advice when we require it, as we do require it at times : but better than advice is sacramental absolution and release from our sins. We have an infallible teacher, not of politics, not of economics, not of art and science, not of the ordinary matters that come under dispute in the senate and the market-place and the law-court and the lecture-hall, but of justice and truth ; of the morality of our actions, not whether they are expedient and wise for earthly purposes, but whether they are sinful or permissible before God ; also of the truth about God and about Christ and redemption. What has the ordinary prittle-prattle of men to say on such a subject as the Immaculate Conception ? What can even philosophy tell us about it ? The Pope rules the question in Christ's name ; and we receiving and studying his teaching come to have clear ideas about the grace of God, and sinfulness, and the conditions of sanctification and salvation, points which hardly any but Catholics appreciate clearly and correctly.

As I have said, the Christian and Catholic Church was not instituted for the making of empires, but for the disposing of souls to sanctity, and thereby to salvation. In discharging this office, the Church, as it strikes me, has wrought four principal effects upon the character of men. It has taught men *humility*, a virtue that the pagan world scarcely knew of. Humility does not figure on the list of Aristotelian virtues. The Latin word *humilis*, I believe, is always used in the bad sense of “ base,” “ cringing.” A philosopher in pagan times was a byword for self-conceit. He was pictured “ stalking along with drawn up eyebrows.” Good men like Cicero and the younger Pliny were for ever playing to the theatre, imagining how their deeds would be admired by the spectators or



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by posterity. *All their works they do to be seen of men* (Matt. xxiii. 5). Christianity teaches a man to live in the presence of a Creator, before whom he is *dust and ashes* (Gen. xviii. 27) ; of a God of holiness, before whom all his good works are as *filthy rags* (Isai. lxiv. 6), *i.e.*, have their goodness intermingled with innumerable defects. The attitude of man before such a God is an attitude of humility. No moral virtue is more characteristically Christian. To be pagan on the other hand is either to be abject, base, grovelling before men, your fellow-sinners, or to be proud ; proud when you prosper, abject and broken-spirited when you fail.

As the Church has taught men humility before God, it has taught them that self-command and control of their own appetites, which is the virtue of *purity*. Not that this virtue was unknown in the pre-Christian world, or that even Catholics universally have been, or are, models of its exercise. I remember how St. John Chrysostom describes the semi-Christian Antioch of the fourth century in language that recalls the old pagan Athens. And does not Dante place in his *Inferno* a bishop, the motive of whose translation from one see to another, more obscure, was the wish of the "servants' servant" to hide away the man's infamy ? Such stories are to be read with the caution that *corruptio optimi pessima*, as the scholastic adage has it, and that of all pagans the worst is a paganised Christian. I remember again Plato's glimpse of "the vision of Beauty along with Chastity set up on holy pedestal" (*Phædrus*, 254 B). But the ideals of paganism were frequently impure ; and as for the practice of the pagan world, we, with all our infirmities, have to thank God our Redeemer who has *brought us up out of the pit of misery and the mire of filth* (Ps. xxxix. 2).

In regard of external goods Christianity has taught mankind *detachment*. I use St. Philip Neri's word, which Cardinal Newman has made classical in English. Plato cried down the sensible world, and exalted as objects of human devotion certain intellectual ideals, which he took to be the true realities, as the ideal Beauty and the like ;

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and he wrote delightful things of the happy eternity after death which the soul of the philosopher was to spend in the contemplation of these ideals. Plato wrote for the few, and affected only the few. The tidings of Christ Risen made the next world a reality to the mind of the many. After that, people of the common sort, young men and young maidens, despised torments, because they *looked forward to the reward*: they *endured as seeing the invisible* (Heb. xi. 26, 27). No other men have lived as Christians have lived and do live, subordinating the present world ever to the world to come. That is *detachment*. It is the world's chief quarrel with true Christianity and with the Catholic Church. The world takes detachment to be a flout and insult to itself. The Christian is *detached*, or *unworldly*, above other men, because he alone has from the resurrection of his Saviour any definite approximation of thought to the good things of the world to come. The first Easter day made a bridge from this world to the next. Whether a religion that inculcates detachment is apt to be a notably potent force moving men to amass wealth, I leave you to consider.

There is a hideous story which I once tried to read, called *Cæsar's Tower*. The tower which gives the name to the book and is depicted on the cover, is a huge crematorium, whither the bodies of the working people are wheeled, and thrown in there without enquiry, into the ever ready flames, while the masters live in luxury in a Socialist Commonwealth. I doubt if the slaves who worked in chains on the lands in Italy in Cicero's time were treated with much more regard for their lives. It is the way of pagan rationalism ever to exalt the mighty and to put down the weak. *Humanum paucis vivit genus*; <sup>1</sup> the human races is accounted to live for the benefit of a few. Paganism bears hard on the soulless many. On the other hand it is an essential tenet of Christianity that in every man there is an immortal soul, and that for every one of these souls Christ died. *Behold, all souls are mine* (Ezech. xviii. 4), is the word of the God who created them and of the Saviour

<sup>1</sup> *Lucan* v. 343.

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who died for them. Charity, the great virtue of a Christian towards his neighbour, is founded upon *respect for his neighbour's soul*. This virtue in regard of our fellow man, along with *humility* before God, *purity* in the control of self, and *detachment* in the use of exterior goods, makes up the square of moral virtues, which I consider to have been impressed upon human life and human history eminently by Christianity and by the Catholic Church.

For modern man the ways are parting between the thought and practice of the ancient Greeks and the thought and practice of Catholic Christianity. To the ancient Greek this world was a place of beauty and of pleasure. The beauty that he loved was the health, strength, and gracefulness of the human form. He loved all pleasure, but rather on the intellectual than on the sensual side. He disliked gross animal excesses, because they were tasteless, because they were out of proportion and measure, and because they spoiled a man, disfiguring his body, undermining his strength, and impeding his thought. To the Greek, man was his own end, and existed for himself. His aim was to be, and to appear to the eye that beheld him and to the ear that caught his words, the perfection of manly beauty and intelligence, while youth and vigour remained to him. Old age to the Greek was a sad autumn, and death an interminable winter. There is something modern in all this.

We know how the Greek mind decayed, and Greek genius was quenched, and empire was lost to Greece, in mad pursuit of beauty, in impatience of all control, in over speculation and over talking, to the neglect of action. Very striking is the contempt which a Roman like Cicero, who owed so much to Hellenic culture, felt and expressed for the Greeklings of his day. But the unexpected came to be. A resurrection was vouchsafed to the Greek mind in the advent of Christianity. Christian theology revived the glories of the philosophy that lit up the Hellas of old. The four great Greek Doctors of the Church, St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Gregory Nazianzen, and St. John Chrysostom, recalled the subtlety of Attic thought and

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the eloquence of the Attic orators. Santa Sophia is not unworthy of the race that built the Parthenon. The imperial city of Constantine was more august, more powerful, a more lasting home of empire than Athens, and probably not less beautiful. This argues that Hellenic culture can be blended with Christianity. What we may desire for ourselves is a Greek mind, and if you will, a Greek body, with a Catholic soul and a Christian heart : add thereto the judgment and the energy, the good temper and the moderation characteristic of the British Isles ; and the outcome will be a noble specimen of a man.



## CONFERENCE XVIII : BAPTISMAL HOLINESS

**N**OT for any controversial purpose, but as aptly leading up to my theme, I quote some words of the Archbishop of Canterbury in his Charge on the 10th of this October (1898). After admitting that there very well may be souls of the faithful departed who, though not lost, will yet not go straight to heaven, His Grace says of them : " They are not yet sanctified : they have not yet the holiness without which none shall see the Lord." For a believer in baptismal regeneration it seems an extraordinary thing to say of souls passing out of the body in such a state as to be worthy of ultimate salvation, " they are not yet sanctified." Not though they have been baptized, my Lord ? are not the baptized regenerate and sanctified ? if a man casts off the sanctification of his baptism, and dies without having recovered it, shall he find holiness in another world ? I believe it would not be fair to hold His Grace to the strict meaning of his words. I view them rather as a slip or oversight. He had in his mind, I think, not the holiness that is given in baptism, but that perfection of Christian conduct in which even good men are often wanting. Such men may be beset even at their last hour by much inordinate solicitude for this world's goods, by petty rancours and jealousies, and by such a chilling atmosphere intervening between them and God, that they habitually feel towards Him as towards a Being whom they must reckon with and cannot do without, rather than as towards a Father.

Conduct men do understand, but the holiness of baptismal grace, otherwise called sanctifying grace, is little understood, indeed is habitually overlooked, beyond the pale of the Catholic Church. Here I believe we touch one of the greatest of the differences between the average Anglican mind and the mind of Catholic theology. Holiness is not visible, as conduct is : therefore holiness is

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forgotten and ignored. There is indeed an outward beauty and mien of holiness, sometimes very striking : but appearances are fallacious. Many are holy, who do not look it. It is also true that holiness must bear fruit in good works, or it will die ; and good works are visible. But good, or at least socially useful works, may grow on other trees than holiness : and holiness may exist in a state of comparative sterility, so far as appearances go. There is holiness in the soul of a baptized infant, months before good works are possible. It is difficult to say precisely what sort of an entity this baptismal holiness is. If we say it is a *physical* entity, and makes a physical change in the soul, we are asked what sort of change, and we cannot tell. To call it a *moral* entity is only hiding our ignorance under a name. Besides, if we go too far in that direction, we shall be stranded on the shoal of Lutheranism and "imputed justice." A safe thing to say is that baptismal holiness, or the holiness of sanctifying grace, is a special *dedication* of the soul and body of the recipient to God as Lord, and further as Father, so that the being becomes God's own, and *allied to God*, in a way that it was not by the mere fact of God having created it. So Bunyan, of "converted men and women—" "they walked like people that carried the Broad Seal of Heaven about them" (*Grace Abounding* n. 74).

The baptized are described by St. John as *made sons of God*, as *born of God* (John i. 12, 13) ; by Our Lord as *born again of water and the Holy Ghost* (John iii. 5) ; by St. Paul as *a new creation in Christ* (2 Cor. v. 17 ; Gal. vi. 15) ; by St. Peter as *partakers of the divine nature* (2 Pet. i. 4), an expression repeated in the Church's prayer at the mixing of the chalice at Mass, "grant us to become partakers of His divinity, who has deigned to become partaker of our humanity." This points to something indescribably higher than the life of a reasonable man. This higher life of the baptized Christian, the adopted child of God ; this life of sanctifying grace, or supernatural holiness, is the spiritual ideal proposed to the Christian man. We shall understand this ideal better for considering in what it

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culminates. It culminates in the vision of God, called the *beatific vision*, in heaven. We may know something of the greater height by measuring the lower level above which it towers. What then is the highest good which the life of mere reason and philosophic virtue could possibly conduct man to ? A good beyond this world : a good attained after death : a good lasting for ever : in fact, the perpetual natural happiness of the soul. The soul of man is naturally immortal : it is not made immortal by baptism. Very possibly, but for the faith given us in baptism, we should waver and hesitate over the philosophic reasons alleged in proof of immortality. Immortality is a fact of philosophy for all that, it is a condition of human nature, not an endowment of grace. The proposition is true in the abstract, that mere reason is a sufficient guide to a happy immortality : that whoever leads a reasonable life, rising no higher and sinking no lower than the level which reason indicates, will be for ever happy when he comes to die. I say it is true "in the abstract," apart from the actual conditions in which God has been pleased to place man. God might have left man with no better guide than reason : God might have never intended man to rise above a mere human, that is, a rational standard. In that case, the eternal happiness of the man who had shaped his life according to reason would have been a life of philosophic contemplation, not of God directly seen, but of the works of God, and of God as knowable in His works. It would have been a sufficient and a satisfying happiness, for mere man as such. But God has called man to higher things ; and the man in whose ears that call sounds in vain, the man to whom higher things are proposed, and he contemns them, is not a reasonable man, and deserves not a reasonable man's reward.

Yesterday, to-day, every day, some baptized man dies with the grace of his baptism upon him. He may have lost it at sundry times of his life, but he has got it back again, and he dies with it. When the King comes in to view his guests, this one is found with the needful *wedding-garment* (Matt. xxii. 12). It is not for want of holiness, if he is not

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admitted at once to the eternal feast of All Saints. If he were not holy now, he never would be made holy : nay, he is now in the instant of his death as holy as ever he shall be : for holiness, strange to say, is obtainable by man only on this sinful earth, in the midst of struggles and sorrows. The measure of holiness with which any man dies is his measure for eternity : it is the measure of his particular glory in heaven. So much holiness, so much glory : no holiness, no heaven. And holiness, as I have endeavoured to explain, does not mean conduct, nor moral character : though conduct and character are large factors in determining holiness. Holiness is the supernatural gift of God in baptism and in the other sacraments : a gift which man must guard and augment by the good works which God's grace will enable him to do.



## CONFERENCE XIX : THE LIKENESS OF THE SON OF MAN.

**T**HIS first Sunday of Advent is the first day of the Church's liturgical year. As the natural year is waning, the Church enters upon a season of spring. For Advent is a spring-time, not devoid of austerity, as spring also has its asperities and its crisp, piercing airs,—still redolent of joy and glad expectation, “because He cometh.” In a sense the whole history of the Church is one long Advent, beginning with the birth of Christ and completed in His coming at the last day of general resurrection and judgment. The term and purpose of Advent is nowhere better expressed than in the prayer, called the Secret, at the Christmas midnight Mass, *in illius inveniamur forma, in quo tecum est nostra substantia*. The terminology is scholastic : therefore the word *form* does not mean mere outward contour : *form* is that which penetrates a being through and through, and constitutes its character, special excellence, worth, and rank. We then are to be in the *form* of Christ, as in Christ the *substance* of our humanity, a human body and soul, is united with the Godhead. This is the mystery of Christianity, the prayer of the priest at the altar in the solemn hour of high festival, that we may be found in His form, in whom with Thee is our substance. This is the likeness of the Son of Man, of which I wish to speak to you to-day.

Eighty times in the four gospels Our Lord applies to Himself the designation *the Son of Man*. No other lips but His own ever apply it to Him, except that Stephen in the moment of his martyrdom cries out : *I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God* (Acts vii. 56) ; and the Jews once, in indignation and surprise, taking up Our Lord's words, ask *Who is this the Son of Man ?* (John xii. 34). The phrase is found in the Old Testament, always without the definite

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article, which in the New Testament is never absent, except in Apoc. i. 13, where *one like a son of man* is copied from Daniel, vii. 13. *Son of man* does not appear to have been a recognised name of the Messiah, till Our Lord took it up. In the Psalms we read, *sons of men* (iv. 3 ; lxxxix. 3 ; cvi. 8), which means merely "men," as "sons of Achaeans" in Homer, and "sons of physicians," mean "Achaeans," "physicians." The prophet Ezechiel is addressed as *son of man* some ninety times over by the Lord who inspired him, reminding him that he was no more than human. In Daniel we have a remarkable text (vii. 13), *one like a son of man was coming in the clouds of heaven*. This text Our Lord twice applies to Himself and His coming in judgment, once in this day's gospel : *They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds* (Luke xxi. 27), and again before Caiphas, vindicating to Himself as Man that Divine glory of which *the clouds of heaven* were the acknowledged symbol (Matt. xxvi. 64). *The Son of Man* means then "the Man." Jesus Christ was pre-eminently "the Man," first as being full and perfect man, as really as any of us is a man, and more entirely, inasmuch he had in Himself self human nature in its highest perfection as a nature, and fullest amplitude : secondly, as being the head of our race, *the last Adam* (1 Cor. xv. 45), the chief, typical, and model Man. In that aspect we are now to consider Him.

We must observe at the outset that our Model is no Platonic ideal, no *ἀντοάνθρωπος*, no spiritual and super-sensible object answering to an abstract conception of perfect humanity. Jesus Christ is an actual man. *A spirit*, He says, *hath not flesh and bones as you see me have* (Luke xxiv. 39). He lived a human life upon this earth ; and we are not left to an *a priori* construction of what that life must have been : the story is of it told in the gospels : there we see Him "in his habit, as he lived." Our imitation presupposes knowledge of the gospel history, cognisance and memory of the facts, and more than that, the realisation of those facts and representation of them to the mind's eye through the imagination. Let me dwell a little on this important point. I wish the time allowed me

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to read to you a passage from Newman's sermon on *Faith and Sight*, preached before the University of Oxford, 27th May, 1832, the passage beginning with the thesis that "the world overcomes us, not merely by appealing to our reason, or exciting out passions, but by imposing on our imagination"; and ending by "taking fire," as Carlyle says, in the magnificent outburst: "The world sweeps by in long procession; its principalities and powers, its Babel of languages, the astrologers of Chaldaea, the horse and its rider and the chariots of Egypt, Baal, and Ashtoreth, and their false worship; and those who witness, feel its fascination; they flock after it; with a strange fancy, they ape its gestures, and doat over its mummeries." The burden of the passage is the danger of imagination in early life, not simply of filthy and sinful imaginations, but of the image thrown on the mind by this big world and arena of human struggles, its excitements, its interests, its glories, its vicissitudes, all the impetuous rush of life. The religion learnt in childhood comes by contrast to appear a childish invention, pretty indeed, but petty, quite inadequate to measure the magnitude of things that are and to allow for their manifold complexity. "This world is too much with us," as Wordsworth says, and its overpowering, engrossing presence thrusts the next world out of view. The visible and sensible things, which imagination bodies forth, hide away the invisible things of faith, dwarf them, and dwindle them down to bare outlines and faded shadows. This danger is met, as the illustrious writer I have quoted was fond of insisting, by the existence of the visible Church, with its sacraments, its ritual, its outward pomp, circumstance, and grandeur. "That great institution, the Catholic Church," he says, "has been set up by Divine Mercy as a present, visible antagonist, and the only possible antagonist, to sight and sense."<sup>1</sup>

In another way (and this is more connected with our present discourse) the worldliness of imagination is held in check by every means of representing to the senses and

<sup>1</sup> Lecture on *Christianity and Medical Science*.

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the imagination the life that Christ actually led on earth. The statue of the Madonna and Child, and the Crucifix are thus most familiar and powerful aids. They banish thoughts against faith, as against other virtues. Pictures like those of Doré and Tissot, the Passion Play of Ammergau, illustrations of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, well-written Lives of Christ, and particularly "Contemplations," or "Studies" of scenes of that Life, the favourite method of prayer of St. Ignatius of Loyola, in which method a large part is assigned to imagination, all are helps in this cause. Imagination must be met by imagination, worldly reveries by spiritual reveries, not unfounded on historic reality. We need to bring home to our understanding and innermost heart that there once walked in the fields a peasant Child, who could raise His eyes to the stars of heaven and say, "Those are My handiwork, those are Mine : I call them all by their names, and they obey Me as their Master." *Who is this, for the winds and the sea obey him ?* (Luke viii. 25).

We must not however rest content with imagining to ourselves the human life of Christ : we must pass on to imitation. Next to the New Testament, the *Imitation of Christ* is the most Christian book ever written : it grasps in its very title the central idea of Christianity. There is an *ascetic* imitation of Christ, which is our duty ; and a *theological* imitation of Him, which is our privilege : this duty and this privilege are inseparable. "Their souls aglow with a divine ardour," says Plato of certain votaries, "they borrow of their God his ways and practices, so far as it is possible for man to participate with God" (*Phædrus*, 253 A). Those words may describe for us the ascetic imitation of Christ. We are to take up His ways and practices, and be something of the manner of man that He was. Such a vocation may well alarm us. Was He not the *man of sorrows* (Isai. liii. 5) ? Had He not a special mission of expiation for the sin of the world ? Is our life to culminate in scourging and crucifixion ? Surely we should count the cost before we aspire to be imitators of Christ. We should indeed : Christ Himself advises us to count the cost



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(Luke xiv. 28). But none of us need fear being called upon for a perfect imitation of his Saviour. One mortal only has in any way approached this perfect imitation : that was His Blessed and Immaculate Mother. The great Saints have come nearer Him in action, love, and suffering, than we shall ever come. It is not given to any and every one who wills it to turn himself into a St. Philip Neri or a St. Aloysius. We can be saints only so far as grace is given us ; and grace is unequally distributed. The Church is one body with many members, some more honourable, other more feeble. Read 1 Cor. xii. 4-27. It is not given to the members to interchange offices. The foot cannot become the hand, nor the mouth the eye. Christ has a special office, as the Head. We too have our special functions, each his own, in the Body of Christ ; and each must discharge his function, not without his own proper pain and labour, for which his own proper grace will be given him, in union with and in imitation of the Head.

The distribution of grace is a mystery. Grace is ever gratuitous, and no excellence of nature can call down and exact in justice any grace of God. Still grace is superimposed upon nature, and some regard seems to be had to nature in the distribution of grace. We have to sanctify our several natures, and work out our salvation in our several environments. In nature there are no duplicates. No two men have quite the same natural character, or live in quite the same environment. It belongs to the royal and divine excellence of Jesus Christ, that He is the model of all Christian men, of every age, character, nature, and condition, like a jewel with infinite facets. Each of us must copy Him according to the facet, or facets, presented for our particular imitation. We can never hope to resemble Him under all His aspects. They are aspects which He presents to our neighbour to copy, and not to us. Those aspects we cannot copy. Thus, though we all hold the same dogmatic faith, which is the faith of the Catholic Church, and all hope for the vision of one God in heaven, and all love the same heavenly Father, and are bound by the same commandments, and receive the same

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sacraments, yet faith, hope, and charity, and sacramental graces bear different fruit in different hearts, and the yoke of the commandments presses on no two of us with quite the same form of pressure; we have each of us his own special difficulties in being charitable, just, pure, constant and brave in our Christian profession.

Here is the solution of a difficulty which many of us have often felt. "My neighbour Z is a wonderfully pious person; I should like to be a good Catholic; only I can never be like Z; there is a whole alphabet of difference between his nature and mine." The answer is simply this: "No one asked you to be like Z; it would be quite a mistake to try to copy him: he is not your model; look up to Jesus Christ, and make yourself the best copy of Jesus Christ possible in your own natural character, in your own position, and with the graces given to you individually."

One word on the saying of St. Peter: *Christ hath suffered for you, leaving you an example to follow in his footsteps* (1 Pet. ii. 21). We have not such capacities of heart and soul to suffer as Christ our Saviour had. We have not a guilty world to redeem. Our Lord allows us abundance of enjoyments of which He would hardly taste Himself. But it is in the nature of things that, with advancing years, capacity of enjoyment decreases, objects of love are lost, pains multiply; in fact we are gradually weaned from the world, and cease to love that from which we are presently to be taken away. In this downward path of decay and trial, a descent in some lives more gentle, in others abrupt, Christ with His Cross goes before us, and we follow Him in the way of the Cross *pro modulo nostro*.

On the *theological* imitation of Christ, which is our privilege, a few words must suffice here.<sup>1</sup> The imitation I speak of is the assimilation and quasi-identification of the Christian man, living in faith and charity, with the Word made flesh, as the member is assimilated to and in a manner identified with the head of the body to which it

<sup>1</sup> It is the subject of Conference III.

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belongs. The Catechism tells us that our natural likeness to God is not in our body but in our soul. The theological likeness to God made man, of which I speak, is indeed in our soul, but it is more important for us to observe and cherish it in our body ; for our bodies are assimilated to His Blessed Body, and that even before our resurrection to glory. Such is the teaching of St. Paul (Rom. vi. 3-13). Such is the meaning of the axiom of the Fathers, *corpus regenerati caro crucifixi*, "the body of the baptized man is flesh of the Crucified."

I once heard Greek poetry described as one long wail. I seem to catch the tones of that wail, growing shriller, more distinct and passionate as religion decays in that gifted people, and mere blind sensual secularism sets in, till we come to such a verse as this in the Anthology :

πάντα κόνις καὶ πάντα τέφρα καὶ πάντα τὸ μηδέν,  
All is dust, and ashes all, and all is nothingness.

New life and new hope was come when St. John Chrysostom, speaking of the Eucharistic Presence, addressed a Greek audience with the words : "Through this Body I am no longer dust and ashes."<sup>1</sup> Therefore I have called Advent the spring-time of the Christian year, as it heralds the consummation of our Lord's coming among us, the fulfilment of our Christmas prayer, *in illius inveniamur forma, in quo tecum est nostra substantia*.

<sup>1</sup> διὰ τοῦτο τὸ σῶμα οὐκέτι γῆ καὶ σποδὸς ἐγώ. Hom. 24 in 1 Cor.

## CONFERENCE XX : HOW A MAN SHOULD PROVE HIMSELF

THERE was once a French Abbé preaching before the Emperor Napoleon III and his Court. Instead of high argument and rhetoric, the preacher delivered a sort of catechetical lecture, a plain exposition of elementary truths. This diet was not to the taste of the courtiers, but the Emperor had the good sense to say : " Quite right, M. l'Abbé, we are very ignorant, instruct us." I should be sorry to put you at all in the same category with the Court of the Second Empire. Yet even you are better for hearing plain expositions of catechism at times, for this reason, that the same truth is differently appreciated by a child and by a grown-up person. If I may venture on a philosophical term, the " perception " is the same in both, but the " apperception " is different,—apperception differing from perception much as finding books a place on your shelves differs from simply having them delivered at your door. The same truth is introduced into different surroundings in the mind of man and in the mind of a child. It is necessary that you come to take a man's view of the simple truths of religion that you learnt in childhood : therefore you need to have those truths repropounded for your consideration. I am going to put before you to-day matter that is, and ought to be, taught to children, matter, at the same time, of capital importance to salvation, matter which no man should disdain to hear and con over.

The expression " prove himself " is from St. Paul : *Let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice* (1 Cor. xi. 20). On which text the Council of Trent supplies this comment : " Ecclesiastical custom declares that such proving of oneself is necessary, that no man, conscious to himself of mortal sin, however contrite he may think himself, must presume to



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approach the Holy Eucharist without previous sacramental confession" (Sess. xiii. cap. 7). To "prove oneself" then means, not only to examine one's conscience and find out if there be any mortal sin upon it, but also, if such sin be found, to take effectual measures for removing the same, else the discovery of it is useless. There is no use discovering that a copy of verses, for which you are responsible, won't scan, unless you apply a correction and make them scan. We are engaged with the practical subject of the discovery and removal of mortal sin.

The discovery is not difficult. A man can hardly be very ill without knowing it. A Christian man who earnestly desires to serve God, who makes a point of religion and sets it at the head of all his concerns, cannot go and give God mortal offence, and be all unaware of what he has done. So rational theologians teach. So St. Teresa records as said to her by our Lord: "No one loses Me without clearly seeing it." That is, no man who looks to see God, and has the fear of God before his eyes, hurtles against God as it were in the dark, and breaks away from Him unconsciously. There are spiritual writers who describe a soul coming to be beset with mortal sins, and not recognising them as such: these writers either have in view a soul that has quite broken away from God and become reckless, not the soul that we are speaking of, or they write under the influence of Jansenism, and are not to be believed.

To a mortal sin is required a grave obligation, revealed by conscience, violated with full consent.

(1) "A grave obligation" implies a grave precept in a grave matter. It supposes God commanding to the full extent of His authority over us. For lack of this condition, a lie that hurts no man, nor prejudices religion, is a sin, but not a mortal sin; say the same of a small theft or a slight quarrel. These are not mortal sins, and yet are things to avoid, as we avoid bodily ailments that do not threaten our lives.

(2) The grave obligation must be "revealed by

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conscience." All sin is some disregard of conscience. Conscience in the majority of men is imperfectly enlightened, and by no means always reveals obligation according as it objectively exists. Many strange and deplorable acts may thus be excused in the doers of them from the guilt of mortal sin. God is not anxious to bring us in guilty. "God goes round about, looking for excuses to make it possible for you to escape hell."<sup>1</sup>

(3) Even when the obligation is known as grave, there is no mortal transgression except by "full consent" of the will. In a mortal sin, as I once heard a good theologian say, "the whole man sins," not that there are not mortal sins of thought and desire which stop short of action (Matt. v. 28), but in such cases the man throws himself into the thought or desire, head over heels, so to speak, like a man jumping into a river, thoroughly identifying himself, for the time being, with the evil proposed, and this not by a mere movement of appetite, against which the awakened will instantly reacts, but with the approval of the awakened will. Sometimes the will reacts, and that decidedly, but only after some hesitation: then you have a venial sin. Some one may bring an article to my door for sale, which I resolutely refuse to buy, but in closing the door I glance with some half-satisfaction at what he has to offer: that is like the half-constant which makes no more than a venial sin. It is easy, as I have explained, to disentangle will from appetite sufficiently to say that there has been no full consent, and consequently no mortal sin: it is not easy to say that there has been no venial sin, no matter for a "confession of devotion."<sup>2</sup>

Inasmuch as mortal sin is a renunciation of the friendship and grace of God, these words of the great moralist Cardinal de Lugo apply to it:

<sup>1</sup> *περὶσει προφάσεις ζητῶν δι' ὧν δυνήσῃ ἀπαλλαγῆναι τῆς γέννης* (St. John Chrysostom, Hom. 3 in Matt).

<sup>2</sup> A "confession of devotion" is a confession of sin which you are not obliged to confess. In the Anglican view, all confessions are confessions of devotion.

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Things that are in a man's full ownership cannot be forfeited without the man's full consent. When there is only half-full liberty, any consent given is not full but half-full, and therefore is not a consent but a half-consent, and that not of a man but of half a man. It is called a half-full advertence, because the man being in a sort of semisomnolent state, is not all awake, but half-awake and half-asleep, and therefore it is not the whole man that consents but half of the man, and thus the act is not altogether a human act, but a half-human act, insufficient for renunciation of ownership.<sup>1</sup>

The peculiar effect of mortal sin is the privation of sanctifying grace, and the coming to be in a state of damnation, liable to hell fire, the sure doom of any soul which passes out of the body by death in that state. A further incident is the incapacity to do any act meritorious of heaven. Do not misunderstand me. A person in mortal sin may multiply acts of natural virtue : he can be brave, generous, helpful to his neighbour. Nay he can do acts of supernatural virtue too, else he could never repent, for repentance consists of supernatural acts. Those acts put him in the way of recovering the grace of God : but till grace is recovered, and the guilt of mortal sin taken away, no act is registered in heaven as a treasure stored there, equivalent to an increase of eternal glory. A man on the sick-list cannot earn wages ; he can be got well, and then he will earn ; but he earns nothing by going through the process of his cure in hospital. When the soul that has often sinned mortally is finally saved, all the time spent in mortal sin will be found blank, for the matter of heavenly reward,—a time of *empty months and sad nights*, as Job says (vii. 3).

No mere acts of ours, however supernatural, are sufficient atonement for mortal sin. Such sin is atoned for and taken away only through the merits of our Saviour's death on the cross. But certain acts of ours are necessary as conditions to derive to us the benefit of that atonement. God cannot be expected to pardon a sinner who is in no way sorry for having offended Him. Sorrow goes before all forgiveness. You may be sorry rather on God's account

<sup>1</sup> *De Justitia et Jure*, disp. 23, n. 21.

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than on your own, considering God's goodness ; or you may be sorry rather on your own account, considering that you are in God's power. The former is the sorrow of "perfect contrition," the latter is "imperfect contrition," otherwise called "attrition." Attrition fears God more than it loves Him : contrition, when it is perfect, fears indeed, but loves more, and grieves that it has offended a good Father rather than that it has provoked a severe Judge. Our Saviour's death has imparted to our "perfect contrition" this wonderful efficacy, that it abolishes mortal sin in us ; or rather, I should say, perfect contrition opens what Jeremy Taylor would call "a little window in heaven," and through the aperture, however small, the light of God's mercy and sanctifying grace pours in and floods the soul. Any grievous sin there found is immediately forgiven, though the obligation of confessing it in our next confession still remains. But we cannot be sure that our contrition is of this perfect type. That uncertainty should induce us to repeat again and again our acts of contrition ; there is no holy exercise more profitable, none that becomes us better, whoever we are. It should induce us also gladly to seek the absolution which our Saviour gives us by His minister in the sacrament of Penance. There is no avail in that absolution, unless we receive it with a will at present turned away from sin and seriously bent on amendment ; but it is enough if our sorrow then be of that inferior quality, called "attrition," a quality that God offers liberally to any sinner who will ask for it.

The point that I wish particularly to bring home to you is the instantaneousness of the removal of mortal sin, whether by an act of perfect contrition, or by attrition joined with sacramental absolution. Mortal sin comes in an instant, and in an instant it is gone. A long course of events lead up to its coming or removal, but the consummation in either case is instantaneous. So is death instantaneous, and the capsizing of a boat, and a declaration of war, and on the other hand the signing of a treaty of peace, or—better example still—the switching on or off of



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the electric light. I urge this, because the contrary view is common among our Anglican friends. Many of them speak as though they thought that God's love or anger rested on us according to the balance of our good and evil deeds, one against the other. Were this so, clearly there would be no chance of salvation for a dying man, who had led a life of sin and had only half an hour to live. Thus Jeremy Taylor :

He that resolves to live well when a danger is upon him, or a violent fear, or when the appetites of lust are newly satisfied, or newly served, and yet when the temptation comes again, sins again, and then is sorrowful, and resolves once more against it, and yet falls when the temptation returns, is a vain man, but no true penitent, nor in the state of grace ; and if he chance to die in one of these good moods, is very far from salvation. . . . No man is to reckon his pardon immediately upon his returns from sin to the beginnings of a good life, but is to begin his hopes and degrees of confidence according as sin dies in him and grace lives ;<sup>1</sup> as the habits of sin lessen, and righteousness grows ; according as sin returns but seldom, &c., &c. . . . As we return to God, so God returns to us, and our state returns to the probabilities of pardon. . . . God pardons our sins by parts. . . . Remember always, that after a great sin or a habit of sins, a man is not soon made clean.<sup>2</sup>

When Jeremy Taylor wrote, Jansenism was just springing up in France. His principles are exactly those of the Jansenist directors, who instead of obeying their Master's command, *Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him* (Luke xv. 22), sent the poor prodigal to do penance on a distant farm, refusing him absolution till all his bad habits were extirpated. These rigorists knew not the Heart of their Master, nor the impetuous might of His sanctifying grace, nor the efficacy of His sacramental absolution. Besides, their psychology was at fault. They did not attend to the difference between act and habit : how a habit of sin is not itself a sin, every sin being some act : how the will may have gone back upon a past sinful act, and now

<sup>1</sup> Actual or sanctifying grace ? The presence of the smallest degree of sanctifying grace in the soul means that all guilt of mortal sin is gone.

<sup>2</sup> Taylor's *Holy Living*, ch. iv. sect. ix. *Acts and parts of repentance*, nn. 7, 8 : sect x. n. 4.

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be averted and turned away from it and pointed in another direction, and still be apt (through the abiding force of habit) to veer round, and undergo reversion, and sin again. They did not observe that God's merciful grace seizes the moment when this fickle weathercock of a will is at present pointing away from sin, and that the same is the moment for God's minister to seize and impart the benefit of absolution to the penitent while he is capable of it. If he sins again, as, likely enough, he will,—for absolution and justification does not kill on the spot the evil habit,—well, let him repent again, and make his act of perfect contrition as soon as he can : let him even with attrition confess and be once more absolved. The habit will die of sacraments. That is our Lord's treatment. As in other medical treatment, a present crisis is averted ; and in time, only in time, the liability to the return of the crisis will cease. Not merely each particular sin will be pardoned, but the habit itself will be gone.

Here then I lay down for you the one great rule of spiritual life, not a rule of high perfection, but of primary importance and sufficiency for salvation : **LIVE IN THE GRACE OF GOD.** I trust you do know the happiness which the observance of that rule carries with it even in this life. You know how well it stands with the discharge of the duties, with the enjoyment also of the amusements, proper to your state. It simply forbids you evil and folly, things that you are the worse for yielding to. Allow me to end with a mathematical illustration. The life of one who lives all the year round in the state of grace, may be likened to a circle. One who breaks away from God by mortal sin and does not return, may be said to fly off at a tangent. One who sins mortally, but repents at times, describes a sort of polygon ; an irregular polygon with large sides, if his delays in sin are protracted, and his repentances recur only at fitful intervals. But observe what happens, if, however frequently a person falls into mortal sin, he always returns to God immediately the fit is off him. He is always flying off at small tangents, but then back he comes directly. His course may be represented by a regular

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polygon, with many small sides. You know what happens to such a polygon "in the limit." So in the limit, a limit too that will be quickly reached, the soul that repents of mortal sin promptly and perseveringly, will come to live in the grace of God permanently.

## CONFERENCE XXI : THE DAILY PROCEDURE OF JUDGMENT

“**T**HIS *word of faith* (Rom. x. 8) judges men (Heb. iv. 12), and is not to be judged by men. It exercises a judgment that is daily going on. There is peace for those whom it approves as true to it, and terrible judgment for all whom it condemns.” Many years ago I noted down these words which struck me in a sermon. Very characteristic of St. John’s Gospel is a peculiarity, which I am told has its counterpart in good music, the recurrence of a certain theme, or *motif*, now in the same form, now with slight variations. One of these themes is the idea of judgment, expressed in the passage which I have quoted. These are the principal texts of St. John, to which I refer. *For God sent not his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by him. He that doth not believe is already judged, because he believeth not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that light is come into the world, and men have loved darkness rather than the light* (iii. 17-19). *For judgment I am come into this world, that they who see not may see, and they who see may become blind* (ix. 39). *Now is the judgment of this world* (xii. 31). *I am come a light unto the world, that whosoever believeth in me may not remain in darkness. And if any man hear my words and keep them not, I do not judge him : for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that despiseth me and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him. The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day* (xii. 46-48).

You notice how our Lord says : *I am not come to judge the world, but to save ;* and yet, *For judgment I am come into the world : now is the judgment of the world : this is the judgment, that light is come into the world.* The variation of language is partly explained by the Hebrew use of *not* for *not so much* (cf. the *not sacrifice* of Matt. ix. 13). Of the



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two comings of our Lord, the first, in the Incarnation and its continuation in the economy of the Church, is not so much to judge as to save mankind : the second, the *parousia* in the day of judgment, is first and foremost to judge the world, then to consummate the salvation of the elect. Yet the first coming, the Incarnation, the preaching of the Gospel, and the presence of Christ in His Church on earth, is also a judgment of the world, as the words which I have quoted give us clearly to understand. And this is the daily procedure of judgment, of which I wish to speak.

Often in elementary mathematics we have a number of small summations,  $s_1, s_2, s_3, \&c.$ , which we gather under one general expression, and call it  $\Sigma$ . The value of this  $\Sigma$  is simply the collective value of those smaller summations,  $s_1, s_2, \&c.$  Whatever determines them, goes to determine it. It is said of Babylon, *In one hour is thy judgment come* (Apoc. xviii. 10), which means that in one hour the judgment is summed up, formulated, and carried into effect. Yet day by day the matter of judgment is recorded against Babylon, new offences being adjudged and marked down : the sudden and final judgment of the city is the collection of these daily records. Or again, consider the familiar process of a written examination. The results are proclaimed at the end, perhaps with some solemnity : for some days previously the examiners have been occupied upon the papers, making up their minds : but the vital and essential process of judgment was while the examinees had the questions before them and were writing their answers. The questions set and the answers returned, that is *the word* which *judges*, or, in the literal sense of the word, *κρίνει sifts out*, the competent and the incompetent. Even so the word of Christ, spoken in His life on earth by Himself, and declared now by His Church, day by day judges and sifts out the believer and the unbeliever, the heedful and the heedless, the elect and the reprobate, the *sheep* and the *goats* (Matt. xxv. 32). When Christ comes in judgment at the last day, He shall but confirm and enforce the sum total of these separate judgments that we

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ourselves are recording for or against ourselves every day that we live.

The expectation of judgment is an attitude of mind peculiarly Christian. The ancients had heard of Æacus and Rhadamanthus, not to any serious effect upon the lives of most of them. They regarded no consequences of their actions except in the temporal order. Thus they found license to live recklessly,—an illogical license, I dare say, but men took it, and will take it when they expect no eternal Judge. The Apostles' message to the world was definite and came home, that He whom they had seen risen and ascending into heaven was to come again to judge every man according to his works. *He hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in justice by the man whom he hath appointed, whereof he hath given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead* (Acts xvii. 31). Such was the first lesson in Christianity given at Athens. And the lesson took such hold, that the first Christians looked forward to the coming of their Lord in judgment as an event that might occur any day, and very probably would occur in their life-time. They did not appreciate the magnitude of the Incarnation and the breadth of Church history. They should rather have considered, or we should rather consider, our Lord's telling us that even His first coming, still continuing, is a continued judgment; and that every day of the Church's history and of our lives is a day of judgment for the Church and for us.

*Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart be in good in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes; eat thy bread in joy, and drink thy wine in gladness: and know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment* (Eccles. ix. 7; xi. 9). The door is opened for your enjoying yourselves in the season when enjoyment is sweetest; at the same time you are reminded that these very temporal blessings are a test and a judgment of your fidelity to God. Much more is every supernatural gift, every grace, a judgment; the presence of Christ is a judgment, the Holy Eucharist, the Gospel, the Catholic Church is a judgment.

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The Church even now judges the world, that is, puts the world on its trial, not certainly to the condemnation of all who do not at once turn Catholic, but her presence is a reinforcement of the Christian element in men's minds, a condemnation of sheer unbelief, a call to become Christianised and therefore Catholicised further and further, according as the light of Christ shall illuminate each several soul. We have no discernment of the extent of such individual guidance in this case and in that. We are not judges : God's word is the judge : we cannot tell how far into each heart the divine light penetrates, and consequently how far it judges that individual man. Only in general we know that as there is a vast cloud of invincible ignorance, which is an excuse before God, and much good faith in erroneous and imperfect ways, so there is here in the world and there what in St. John's Gospel is called *darkness* and *blindness* (i. 5 ; iii. 19 ; ix. 39 ; xii. 37-40, 46), that is, shutting the eyes to such light as God actually offers in Christ to this or that man's soul. This was the sin of many of the Jews with whom our Lord conversed, and it is the sin of many men, though we cannot say of what men, at this day. The Catholic Church is indeed a very grave presence to confront, and men feel it so, and grow uneasy before her : for all the terrors of the judgment-day are hidden beneath her russet robe. Like her Divine Founder, who commissioned her, she walks the earth in judgment. *The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last day.*

Now I would have you observe that this judgment must *begin from the house of God* (1 Pet. iv. 17 ; Ezech. ix. 6). To Catholics above all men the teaching of the Catholic Church is a judgment. Theirs is the faith, and theirs the Sacraments. In the Gospels Our Lord speaks with earnestness approaching to alarm, about the responsibility incurred by those who adhered to Him, and followed Him, and received His gifts. Cf. Matt. vii. 21-27 ; viii. 11, 12 ; xi. 20-24 ; xii. 41, 42 ; Luke xi. 27, 28 ; John xiii, 17, 18. Not the mere reception, but the use of His gifts and the turning them to profit, did He look for. A gift

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given and accepted and then lying sterile, a *pound laid up in a napkin* (Luke xix. 20), He tells us is a fatal possession. Your rank as Catholics is your judgment, your trial : your fidelity now will be an earnest of the fidelity of the rest of your lives. Keep this before your eyes, that you are answerable before God, and will be judged by God, above the measure of other men your associates. Now is your judgment.

To meet one daily procedure of judgment by another is the aim of the exercise which no wise Christian omits, of examining his conscience every night before retiring to rest. *If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged* (1 Cor. xi. 31). We consider our general relations with God, whether we have reason to think ourselves in His grace or not, and how judgment has gone for us or against us in the details of this particular day. We conclude in any case with the heartiest and most explicit act of contrition that we can make : “ My God, I am sorry if ever I have seriously displeased Thee, because Thou art my Father, most worthy of all love.” This is perfect contrition, and carries forgiveness of all mortal sin with it, through the Blood of Christ. We ask ourselves also what good we have done this day, what use we have made of God’s blessings, our health, strength, and ability, and supernatural graces and favours ; what good our last Communion has done us, whether we are less slothful, less petulant and arrogant, and more pure ; whether we have carried out the good resolutions we then made, or whether we ever make any good resolutions at all deserving of that name. Such is the daily examination of conscience.



## CONFERENCE XXII : THE SACRIFICE OF THE CROSS

**C**OMMENTING on the promise, *He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and fire* (Matt. iii. 11), St. John Chrysostom writes : " The Lamb had to be slain, and the sin taken away, and the enmity appeased, and the burial to take place and the resurrection, and then the Holy Ghost was to come." I have said much of sanctifying grace, the gift of the Holy Ghost ; much, I hope, to console you in the thought of the grandeur of the ideal of the Christian man. But I cannot forget the text : *Wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul that worketh iniquity, of the Jew first and of the Greek* (Rom. ii. 7, 8), of the Christian first and of the heathen. I cannot shut my eyes, nor can you, to the terrible prevalence of sin upon this earth. We need no revelation to assure us of that. We have revelation to assure us how this torrent of iniquity took its source in the original transgression of our first parent. And how shall this *besetting sin* (Heb. xii. 1) be taken away ? For unless it is taken away, the ideal of the Christian man can never be realised. It is taken away by the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, and by that alone.

Every sin leads, in the order of nature and divine justice, to a proportionate degree of suffering. " Sin and suffer for it " : it is an intuition of the human race, one of those intuitions that philosophy cannot set aside, because they are more valid and convincing than any philosophy. Disease too means suffering, and is often cured by some painful operation : but the pain there is no part of the cure, and it is the glory of modern science to operate without pain. But pain is essential to the cure of sin. Pain itself is medicine to the sinner. Of the medicinal working of punishment, in some small degree, we have all had experience in our own persons. It might seem impossible

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for any pain to be medicinal and remedial of sin, except it be borne and felt by the sinner himself. You must take your own medicine. Ordinarily this rule holds : yet we know of one case in which the pain suffered by another has been medicinal to us, and cured us of the evil propensities born of our sins. I mean that we have often been converted and turned away from our sin by the thought of Christ's Passion. However, it is not the medicinal working of pain and punishment that we are now mainly concerned to observe.

The primary purpose of punishment is expiation. Punishment is retrospective. Punishment is vengeance, the vengeance of the law and of the Lord. I more than admit, I would strongly urge in its due place, the principle that the measures of human punishment are to be taken, not from vengeance, but from the hope of amending the offender, or warning the community by the example made of him. Within those limits human punishment is vindictive ; beyond them punishment must be left to Him who says, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay* (Deut. xxxii. 35). I need not add that private vengeance is forbidden us. The only vengeance allowable for us to enjoy is the vengeance of the law, and that on public grounds. The magistrate *beareth not the sword in vain, for he is the minister of God, an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil* (Rom. xiii. 4). If such a crime had been committed in this country as was committed in Switzerland some months ago<sup>1</sup>, there would have been general satisfaction in the murderer undergoing the utmost rigour of the law, not for his private amendment, nor merely for the deterring of others, but principally as an atonement to public justice and to outraged majesty. There is such a thing as righteous vengeance. I say this, because there are those who,—on theological grounds I imagine, and for apprehension of certain conclusions thence deducible in eschatology,—wish to brand the whole idea of vengeance, whether in this world or the next, as immoral. It is not so.

If sin must be expiated by suffering, and God will

<sup>1</sup> The murder of the Empress of Austria.

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execute His vengeance upon every sinner, the world stands in some considerable danger. By our sins we are all deep in God's debt. It ought to interest us to know whether God is willing to abate any of His wrath, or whether He will insist on punishing every sin to the full extent of what the sin deserves and of what the sinner is able to pay in suffering. Philosophy cannot answer this question. Philosophy argues from *a priori* necessities, as does geometry. There is no *a priori* necessity of God forgiving any sin. He may exact His due of vengeance even to *the last farthing* (Matt. v. 26). Happily for us, on the other hand, there is no necessity either of God's denying pardon to the sinner : although great philosophers have argued such a necessity, deeming it an outrage upon natural right if any sin, once committed, have not final quittance in the full punishment of the sinner. Whether God will grant or refuse pardon, and if He will pardon, upon what terms, depends upon His free will, which we can only know by His telling us, that is, by divine revelation. Apart from revelation we may discern thus much, that there can be no pardon anyhow without the sinner going back upon his evil deed and being sorry for it. Pardon and impenitence cannot meet and agree. But sorrow is far enough from atonement for a grave offence, such as treason, treachery, the wanton destruction of a treasure of beauty and loveliness. The miscreant is sorry, that is the least he can do, to be sorry ; but the law and he are not quits for all that. We must gather from revelation what further satisfaction, besides our sorrow, God will require for our sin, short of our fearful and condign punishment.

God is ready to pardon the penitent ; and God will finally punish the impenitent sinner. These two facts make up, I may say, the warp and the woof of the whole texture of revelation contained in the Bible, from Gen. iii. 9 to Apoc. xxii. 14, 15. A little closer search into the sacred page, and we come upon this fact, that God will often grant pardon, or at least respite, to the sinner, in consideration of the deserts of some good man with whom the sinner is connected. Thus He would have spared

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Sodom, could ten just men have been found in the city (Gen. xviii. 23-32). *For David my servant's sake*, He would not take away the kingdom wholly from sinful Solomon and his posterity (3 Kings xi. 31-39; Ps. cxxxi. 10). We have here the idea of vicarious goodness, that is, of a sinner finding mercy thanks to the goodness of some good man with whom he is connected, whose interests are bound up with his, so the innocent would in some manner suffer if the guilty were punished. Now let us further suppose that the goodness put forward to screen the sinner is no cheap quality of virtue, practised without effort, but has been costly, toilsome, painful, and so heroic. Of this quality was David's goodness, according to the verse: *Remember, O Lord, David and all his meekness* (Ps. cxxxi. 1), where the Anglican version has from the Hebrew, *and all his afflictions*, the meaning in fact being *his meekness under afflictions*. Vicarious goodness and suffering combined, or vicarious suffering for goodness' sake, or in a manner vicarious martyrdom, is a plea of twofold potency to obtain respite for the sinner, and time to repent, and final pardon, if he will repent.

From vicarious martyrdom the transition is not far to sacrifice. Clearly it will never do for the sinner to seize upon an innocent person, and kill him in substitution for himself: that were not sacrifice, but murder. Nor must the sinner kill himself: that would be suicide. It remains to take the life of some blameless animal, some creature perfect of its kind, without physical blemish, and offer that to God in lieu of your own life, in conjunction with your own penitential tears. That is a sacrifice. It would lead me too far afield to trace the history of sacrifice in the ancient world. I appeal to your own memories of what you have read in the classics. I can only say that the aphorism, *Without shedding of blood is no remission* (Heb. ix. 22) is borne out by every tradition, whether of Gentile or of Jew.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Aristophanes, *Pax* 374, where a man, threatened with death, at once begs for money to buy an animal for sacrifice: also Aeschylus, *Eumenides*, 273, 428-430. And Ovid: *Cor pro corde, precor, pro fibris accipe fibras: Hanc animam vobis pro meliore damus.*



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The Jewish tradition is summed up in the Epistle to the Hebrews, c. ix. *The high priest entereth into the holy of holies not without blood, which he offereth for his own and the people's ignorance. . . . Moses taking the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and byssop, sprinkled the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. The tabernacle also itself and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled with blood ; and all things nearly are cleansed with blood according to the law, and without shedding of blood is no remission.* In the Temple at Jerusalem was kept up a perpetual daily sacrifice, one lamb in the morning and one in the evening, the morning and evening sacrifice, till the Temple was destroyed (Num. xxviii. 3-8). Yet that was a mere *parable of the time to come : it was impossible for sins to be taken away with the blood of irrational animals* (Heb. ix. 9 ; x. 4).

We are now come to the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, of which all these sacrifices were the earnest and the figure. And first I would say that the crucifixion was before God a sacrifice, not an execution. Christ was not "punished" by His Father for our sins. You may hear that expression sometimes used by uncautious believers, or even by disbelievers in the Atonement, who would willingly put the doctrine in an odious light. But it is not correct. Punishment presupposes condemnation : now there could be no condemnation passed upon Christ by God. It is true, *the chastisement of our peace was upon him* (Isaias liii. 5) which means that what would have been chastisement, had it fallen upon us, fell upon Him, and by His endurance of it our peace was made with God. But to Him it was not chastisement.

*Christ died for our sins*, says St. Peter, *the just for the unjust ; he bore our sins in his body upon the tree* (1 Pet. iii. 18 ; ii. 24). *He was made for us sin*, says St. Paul, that is, as one sinful : *he was made a curse for us*, or as one accursed (2 Cor. v. 21 ; Gal. iii. 13). These are deep utterances, and I should shrink from undertaking to declare to you the whole counsel of God in this regard. I will put what I am able to say shortly under these heads.

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1. God the Son, entering the world as mortal man, became in His assumed human nature the new Head of mankind. He set aside our first parent, our original head and representative, whose transgression had involved us in spiritual ruin. He took Adam's place. Becoming our representative, He also became our surety, undertaking to pay our debts (Romans v ; 1 Cor. xv. 45-49).

2. This position of head and representative, and surety for the human race, was assumed by Jesus Christ *voluntarily*: by which word I refer not so much to His own divine decree, by which He made Himself man, as to the act of His human will subsequent to His Incarnation, by which He placed Himself at the disposal of His Father, to be the *Son of man*, i.e., the chief of mankind, to *take our infirmities and bear our diseases* (Matt. viii. 17), to obey as we had not obeyed, and to suffer what we had deserved to suffer. For we must remember that such was the dignity of Christ as Man that no command could be imposed upon Him apart from His own express human willingness to receive it. To compare great to small, the obedience that a religious man pays to his superior is voluntary, inasmuch as it was by a free election that he originally bound himself thereto. But more than this, theologians say, it rested with Christ as man, at any moment of His earthly existence even during the hours that He was hanging on the cross, by an absolute act of His human will to ask to be discharged of the burden of satisfying for us, and He would have been there and then discharged: He would have been glorified and we left unredeemed (Heb. x. 5-10; Phil. ii. 6-7; Matt. xxvi. 53).

3. It is scarcely necessary to say that Christ's suffering and death was voluntary also in this respect, that He was in no way overpowered by force of the Jews or surprised by treachery. Often as He willed, when surrounded by raging enemies, He *passed through the midst of them and went his way*. The Evangelists are solicitous to show how well He knew beforehand of Judas's treason (John x. 18; Luke iv. 30; Matt. xxvi. 21-25).

4. It was not the mere suffering of an unwilling victim

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that redeemed us, not the mere physical shedding of blood, as though blood acted like a charm or spell to the dissipation of sin. Our debt was contracted by disobedience, our first parents' and our own. Our debt was paid by obedience, most costly and heroic, even unto death and that the death of the cross, with its pain and shame and exhaustion (Rom. v. 19 ; Phil. ii. 8 ; Heb. xii. 2 ; Isaias liii.).

5. Any human act of Christ, even the lightest and easiest, was atonement enough in itself for all human sin. The atonement of the Cross was superabundant, *for with him is plenteous redemption* (Ps. cxxix. 7).

6. All our spiritual good, all our hope of heaven is through the Cross. Through the Cross was Mary Immaculate, Magdalen's many sins were forgiven, and the thief was promised paradise (Acts iv. 12).

## CONFERENCE XXIII : THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

**L**ET me first expose what is of faith. The Council of Trent in the 22nd Session, chap. i., says :

Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, though He was once to offer Himself to God the Father by death on the altar of the cross, there to work out our eternal redemption, nevertheless, because His priesthood was not to be extinguished by His death, at the last supper, on the night of His betrayal, by way of leaving to His beloved Spouse the Church a sacrifice visible, as human nature requires,—a sacrifice that might be a representation and re-enactment of the sacrifice that was once to be accomplished in blood upon the cross, whereby the memory of it might endure to the end of the world, and the salutary effect of it might be applied to the remission of the sins that are daily committed by us,—showing Himself forth a priest appointed for ever according to the order of Melchisedech, offered His Body and Blood to God the Father under the appearances of bread and wine, and under the symbols of the same things gave them to His Apostles to receive, appointing them at the same time priests of the New Covenant, and commanding them and their successors in the priesthood to offer the same, which command He gave in these words, *Do this in commemoration of me*, as the Catholic Church has ever understood and taught.

And in chap. ii. :

It is one and the same Victim and the same Offerer, now offering by the ministry of His priests, who then offered Himself on the Cross ; only the manner of offering is different.

In the canons that follow, any one is anathematised who says that a true and proper sacrifice is not offered to God in the Mass, or that the offering merely consists in Christ being given for our food, or that the sacrifice of the Mass is merely one of praise and thanksgiving, or that it is a bare commemoration of the sacrifice accomplished on the Cross, and not a propitiatory sacrifice, or that it benefits the receiver alone, or that the sacrifice of the Mass



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is any derogation from the most holy sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the Cross.

We have also some authentic guidance in the Epistle to the Hebrews. That Epistle puts before us the Priesthood of Christ, in comparison with the priesthood of Aaron and his sons in the Jewish Covenant. Christ's priesthood is shown to be the reality, whereof the other was the shadow : Christ's priesthood eternal, the other temporary, and now ceased : Christ's sacrifice one and all-sufficient for the taking away of sin, the sacrifices of the Old Covenant many and insufficient. The entrance of the Jewish high priest once a year, bearing the blood of victims, beyond the veil into the Holy of Holies, is marked for a figure of our Crucified Redeemer ascending beyond the clouds into heaven. Bearing this in mind we record the following texts, all the more willingly because they are quoted by Protestants against the sacrifice of the Mass. The theory that we shall follow suits these texts, we think, better than any other, because it maintains a closer dependence than any other theory of the sacrifice of the Mass upon the sacrifice of the Cross. *Our great high priest who hath passed within the heavens. Made higher than the heavens. Ever living to make intercession for us. Through his own blood entered in once for all into the holy place. He hath entered into heaven to appear now before the face of God for us. Christ was offered once* (as men die once). *Offering one victim for sins, . . . by one oblation he hath made perfect for ever them that are sanctified* (Heb. iv. 14 ; vii. 25, 26 ; ix. 12, 24, 28 ; x. 12, 14).

Lastly, to the text quoted by the Council, *Do this in commemoration of me* (1 Cor. xi. 24), we add the following declaration of the same : *For as often as you shall eat [better reading, you eat] this bread, and drink this chalice, you shall show forth [better, you show forth] the death of the Lord until he come* (*ib.* v. 26).

We have then two principal points of faith regarding Holy Mass :

(A) The Mass is a true and proper sacrifice.

(B) The Mass is a commemoration of the death of

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Christ, a *showing forth of the death of the Lord*.

Moot points among Catholic theologians are :

(a) In what precisely consists the sacrificial rite of the Mass.

(β) How precisely the Mass shows forth the death of Christ.

Nearly all theologians are now agreed that :

(γ) The sacrificial rite of the Mass consists precisely in the consecration.

(δ) Precisely in the consecration does the Mass show forth the death of Christ.

Thus you see nearly all theologians agree in holding (γ) and (δ) as distinct propositions. But the theory that I am about to propose identifies (γ) and (δ), says that (γ) is (δ) and (δ) is (γ) ; in other words :

(γδ) The sacrificial rite of the Mass consists in the consecration precisely inasmuch as the consecration shows forth the death of Christ.

This theory was taught by Father Gabriel Vasquez, S.J. (1551-1604), in Spain and at Rome, and by Father John Perrone, S.J. (1794-1876), at Rome. The two Jesuit Cardinals de Lugo and Franzelin set it aside as insufficient. Still the theory remains tenable and probable. I give it you as one which, as Catholics, you may hold till you find a better. For twenty-five years, since I first approached the subject, I have not found one better, nor to my mind nearly as good.

First then, how the consecration in the Mass shows forth the death of Christ, and consequently the sacrifice of the Cross. No theory here is satisfactory, that does not take account of the consecration under both kinds, or that so dwells upon the consecration of the bread as to make the consecration of the chalice superfluous, or at least, apart from the positive institution of Christ, non-essential. Christ died on the cross by the shedding of His Blood, by the separation of His Blood from His Body. That separation is marked by the separate consecration of the bread into the Body of Christ and the wine into His

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Blood. To understand this better, we must observe what is present under either species "by concomitance," as theologians speak, and what "by force of the words" of consecration. On the principle that "the sacraments effect what they signify," there is present in the Host, by force of the words of consecration, the Body of Christ and no more; and in the Chalice, by force of the words of consecration, the Blood of Christ and no more. But inasmuch as the Body of Christ does not exist except in conjunction with the rest of His Sacred Humanity, wherever the Body is, there is the whole Christ. Thus the Body is under the species of bread in the Host by force of the words: the Blood of Christ, His Soul, and His Divinity, by concomitance. And similarly of the Chalice. But, in regard of what is present by force of the words apart from concomitance, the first consecration places separately the Body of Christ, the second consecration His Blood. This is called by theologians a "mystical," or "symbolical," separation, and consequently a mystical, or symbolical, slaying of Christ. Thus in the double consecration *the death of the Lord is shown forth*, although He does not actually die.

Vasquez puts the matter thus :

Since, by force of the words, only the Body of Christ is put under the species of bread, and only His Blood under the species of wine,—although under either species the whole Christ is present by concomitance,—the consecration of the two separate species thus performed constitutes a representation of that separation of the Body from the Blood which makes death; and this representation is called a mystical separation. And the death itself is represented: therefore it is called a mystical slaying. . . . Before the consecration of the wine, the Body of Christ is not represented as dead and immolated (Vasquez, disp. 223, nn. 37, 45).

To this I will add some words from the Lenten Pastoral of His Eminence Cardinal Vaughan for 1895.

It is to be noted that after the Consecration the Priest addresses not one word to Our Lord as there, but addresses only God, as God in Heaven. . . . But at the *Agnus Dei* we begin to pray to Jesus Christ. This is said to be because Our Lord is treated after the Consecration as a Victim slain: a Victim is offered up, not

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spoken to. The placing of the particle of the Sacred Host in the Chalice [immediately before the *Agnus Dei*] is thought to represent the reunion of the Body and Blood of Our Lord in the Resurrection (*The Woman and her Child with us*, p. 12).

We are next to consider how in the Consecration we have the sacrifice of the Mass. For a sacrifice you must have a priest and a victim. The victim is some living creature. This living creature must be offered to God, and more than that, its life must be taken, it must be slain. To have been sacrificed and still to be alive (apart from any resurrection) is a contradiction in terms.<sup>1</sup> The victim is slain to denote God's sovereign dominion, as Lord of Life and death. Also, as the sacrifice is propitiatory, *i.e.*, an atonement for sin, the victim is slain in substitution for the offerer, who confesses that he for his sin deserves to die. Such substitution is denoted by laying the hands upon the victim.<sup>2</sup> Thus we gather our definition. *A sacrifice is a religious rite, whereby a living thing is offered to God and slain, in acknowledgment of God's supreme dominion as Lord of life and death, and also in atonement for his sin for whom the sacrifice is offered, who confesses that he deserves to die, and gives the life of this living thing in substitution for his own.*

Whatever then there is in the Mass to mark Christ as slain, that constitutes the essential sacrificial rite of the Mass. But, as we have shown, the twofold consecration marks Christ as slain in the Mass : therefore it is the twofold consecration, so significant, that essentially constitutes the Mass a sacrifice.

But here comes a difficulty, Christ is not slain in the Mass really, only mystically and symbolically : therefore,

<sup>1</sup> The reader may look up the meanings of *σφάττειν* and *mactare* in the dictionaries. The substantive *hostia* is connected with an old verb *hostio*, 'I strike.' And the truth that without sacrifice there is no forgiveness of sin is thus expressed : *without shedding of blood is no remission* (Heb. x. 22). Sacrifice then involves shedding of blood.

<sup>2</sup> *Thou shalt bring a calf before the tabernacle of the testimony ; and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands over its head, and thou shalt slay it in the sight of the Lord* (Exod. xxix. 10, 11 ; cf. Levit. xvi. 21). This is why the priest stretches his hands over the bread and wine at the prayer *Hanc igitur* just before the consecration.



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it would appear, the Mass is not a real but only a mystical and symbolical sacrifice, which is no "true and proper sacrifice." To this it may be replied that, as a sacrifice is essentially a sign to God, symbolising His dominion and our sinfulness, such a sign may be paid sufficiently by a slaying which is symbolic only, in a case where the fitness of things militates against the actual death of the victim : this is illustrated by Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. xxii. 10-15). This answer goes some way to meet the difficulty. But our answer goes further. We distinguish between the symbol of a slaying which never takes place, and the symbol of a slaying which has actually taken place, the symbolic rite in either case being performed upon the very person of the victim there present. We observe that though Isaac was not actually slain, the sacrifice was completed by the actual slaying of the ram that was substituted for him. But there can be no substitute for Christ as Victim of our redemption. If then Christ never had been actually slain, the objection would have some weight. It might even be conceded,—Vasquez at least concedes,—that the mere mystical slaying of Christ by the separate consecration of His Body and Blood would not be enough to constitute a true and proper sacrifice but for the fact of its re-presenting and re-enacting in symbol the actual shedding of the Blood of Jesus Christ on the altar of the Cross. Thus the Crucifixion it is that makes the Mass a sacrifice. The Mass is a sacrifice precisely by re-presenting before God the Crucifixion. With reason then does the Epistle to the Hebrews speak of *one oblation*. With reason does the Council of Trent define "the same Victim and the same Offerer, only the manner of offering being different." These are Vasquez's words :

It is essential to a sacrifice commemorative, without actual shedding of blood, that it should represent a sacrifice where there was actual shedding of blood and death of the victim. Wherefore, if Christ had not died, this Sacrament would not be a sacrifice (disp. 223, n. 47).

I am bound to add that this last assertion of Vasquez is vehemently denied by other Catholic theologians : still

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I believe he is right. And his opinion is confirmed by the testimony of antiquity. When the Fathers and Doctors who lived before the Council of Trent speak, as they often do, of the sacrifice of the Mass, what is the special sacrificial feature that they fix upon ? Precisely that which the words of the New Testament also fix upon, that the Mass is the memorial of the death of Christ. It is the memorial of a sacrifice, and by that it is itself a sacrifice ; in other words, it is essentially a commemorative sacrifice, and the commemoration makes the sacrifice. Here are some examples :

What then, do not we offer every day ? Indeed we do offer, but by making commemoration of this death. And it is one sacrifice, not many, . . . for we offer ever the same Victim. . . . Not a different sacrifice, as the Jewish high priest [offered now one lamb, now another], but the same sacrifice we offer always ; or rather, we make commemoration of a sacrifice (St. Chrysostom on Hebrews x. 10).

The celebration of this Sacrament is a representative image of the Passion of Christ, which Passion is a true immolation of Him ; and therefore the representation made in this Sacrament is called an immolation of Christ (St. Thomas, *Summa*, p. 3, q. 83, art. 1).

Quoties hujus hostiæ commemoratio celebratur, opus nostræ redemptionis exercetur—(As often as the commemoration made by this Victim is celebrated, the work of our redemption is put in exercise. Secret for ninth Sunday after Pentecost).

Quoties ei hostiam suæ passionis offerimus, toties nobis ad absolutionem nostram passionem illius reparamus—(As often as we offer to Him the Victim of His Passion, so often do we make His Passion over again to ourselves for our forgiveness. St. Gregory hom. 37, on the Gospels, n. 7).

Dicit (Augustinus) in manifesto corpore suo et in distinctis membris humanitatis suæ semel passum in cruce, qui non manifeste sed invisibiliter est in Sacramento quotidie non passus sed quasi passus representatus. (St. Augustine says that He suffered once on the Cross, in His Body manifest and in the distinctly visible members of His Humanity, who every day in the Sacrament is represented, not manifestly, but invisibly, not suffering, but as it were suffering. Algerus. *De Sacramentis*, l. 1, c. 16).<sup>1</sup>

I have kept back a difficulty which I must now face,—

<sup>1</sup> Algerus was a monk of Cluny (1075—1135). His treatise, *De Sacramentis Corporis et Sanguinis Domini*, possessed a deserved reputation. It is printed in Migne, tom. 180. The whole chapter, l. 1, c. 16, well confirms our argument.

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the main objection alleged against the theory of Vasquez. I face it gladly : a sound theory gains strength from opposition. It is said : " A commemoration is not the thing commemorated : the commemoration of a victory is not a victory, neither then is the commemoration of a sacrifice a sacrifice : thus it would appear that the theory reduces the Mass to a 'bare commemoration of the sacrifice accomplished upon the cross,' the very view which the Council of Trent formally condemns as heretical." The objection, I say, rather brings out the merits of the theory. In the first place, though the commemoration of an event is not the event itself, and the Mass is not the Crucifixion, yet the commemorative re-enactment of a sign may well be itself a sign. But a sacrifice, as we have seen, is a sign to God of recognition of His dominion. Thus the instance of the victory is not in point : a victory and a sacrifice are not in the same category, for a victory is not essentially a sign, a sacrifice is. Moreover, the Mass is emphatically not a "bare commemoration." Deny the Real Presence, as the heresies of the sixteenth century denied it : leave only bread and wine on the altar ; and any rite gone through upon that bread and wine will be the "bare commemoration," which the Council of Trent anathematized. The Sacrifice is lost with the Real Presence. But the rite as we have described it, commemorative of the sacrifice of Calvary, is performed upon the very Body which was pierced there and the Blood which flowed there. It is performed by the express institution and command of Him who was offered there. It is a sacrifice of Christ's own designing ; and the living, present Christ is offered in it.

Vasquez himself meets the objection in these words :

For a commemorative sacrifice to be a true and proper sacrifice, it is not enough for it to be a mere bare sign of the death of a thing, without in any way containing the thing itself, the death of which is represented. At that rate, the thing itself, the death of which is represented, could not be said to be offered in sacrifice ; nor would there be any true commemorative sacrifice, but rather a mere sign and phantom of a sacrifice (*signum tantum et larva sacrificii*) It is an indispensable requisite that the thing itself, the

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death of which is represented, be the sign of its own death . . . For how can that be said truly and really to be offered in sacrifice, about which no action of the offering priest takes place in reality, but only in similitude and in figure ?

In plain words, how could Christ be offered if He were not there ? Vasquez goes on :

Christ Himself under the species of bread and wine by the peculiar way in which the consecration is performed by the priest, represents the death that He died by real shedding of His Blood. . . . And though He is not said really and truly to be slain and die, but only in figure and similitude, nevertheless He is said really and truly to be immolated and offered in sacrifice (Vasquez, disp. 222, nn. 66, 67).

“ We repudiate any repetition of the sacrifice of Christ : we only place before God the memorial of it,” writes an Anglican to *The Times* (20th Jan. 1899, signed C. N. Gray). Before letting this statement pass, we must enquire whether the “ memorial ” is bread and wine, which would be the “ bare commemoration ” condemned at Trent, the *larva sacrificii* repudiated by Vasquez, or whether it is the true Body and Blood of Christ under the appearances of bread and wine, in which sense we willingly accept the statement. In speaking of the Mass, the Catholic Church never uses the phrase “ repetition of the sacrifice of Christ.” Our Catholic Bishops write : “ It was then offered once and for all : and there is no necessity of repeating it.” The Mass they call “ a mystic representation of the blood-shedding of Christ.”<sup>1</sup> “ Representation ” (in the sense of “ re-presentation ”), and “ re-enactment,” and “ reflection,” of the sacrifice of the Cross are terms that we may employ in speaking of the Mass. But it is not a “ repetition,” any more than the moon is a repetition of the sun. All the Masses that are said shine as moons or planets around the central sun of the sacrifice of the Cross, deriving from it their light and their sacrificial being. Christ crucified, Christ in Heaven, Christ in the consecration of the Mass, are the three phases of the eternal priesthood of our great high priest. The

<sup>1</sup> *Vindication of the Bull “ Apostolicæ Curæ,”* n. 12.



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Crucifixion was once for all, it is past and gone, but abides in everlasting efficacy. In heaven, Christ *ever lives to make intercession for us*, not in any posture of supplication or humiliation, for He reigns there in glory, but the very presence of His Sacred Body, marked with the Wounds, is a continual intercession on our behalf. He comes on our altars, not in glory, but in simple and abject guise, *a Lamb standing as slain* (Apoc. v. 6), to the end of the world. The great fact is, that one and the same Person, God and Man, was on Calvary, is in Heaven, and is also (under another appearance) on the Altar from the consecration till He is received in Holy Communion. Whoever accepts that fact, can have no difficulty in accepting the definitions of Trent on the Mass, which alone are of faith : beyond that, as a theological speculation, he can make his choice between the theories of Vasquez, Franzelin, Cienfuegos, and others. Using this liberty. I have followed and advocated the theory of Vasquez. It is helpful to devotion to have some theory here.

Outside the Catholic Church in England we hear loud discussions, the voice of many waters, set up by the meeting of two conflicting currents of religious thought. The old Protestant hatred of the Mass, in which the Reformation began, flows on, steady and strong. But a stream that has long flowed as a feeble undercurrent in a contrary direction, has now gathered strength, and has come to the surface in formidable and manifest opposition. This stream is the craving for the Mass, as the *Spectator* once named it. Clergy and laity in the Established Church are telling one another that the Mass was not abolished, or ought not to have been abolished, at the Reformation. Many would be glad to bring the Mass back again, even at the price of undoing the Reformation. The battle at the Reformation waxed hottest over the Mass. It is the Mass that matters, some one truly said. It is the Mass that matters in the present crisis in the Church of England. To us Catholics in England above all, it is the Mass that matters. For the Mass, the English martyrs bled, and confessors of the faith were imprisoned for harbouring

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the Mass in their houses. It must matter very much to our salvation with what earnestness and frequency we assist at Holy Mass. Do we hear it as often as we can, or as seldom as we dare ? And while we kneel before the Altar, what is our appreciation of the Mystery ?

## CONFERENCE XXIV : A RELIGION WITHOUT A POLITY

THE word "polity" ought never to die in our language, immortalised as it has been in the title of the great work of "the judicious Hooker," *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, a defence, as you know, of the form of Church government established under Elizabeth against certain ultra-Protestants of Geneva, who railed against it as unscriptural. A *polity*, πολιτεία, is a form of government : thus monarchy, democracy, are polities. The view I have in mind to combat is this, that there should be religion indeed, but no manner of polity in religion any more than in music ; that each man's devotion in religion should be regulated by his own taste and conscience, without any interference of one man with another on religious grounds, or any dictation of one man to another touching any religious rites or observances. "How many men between my soul and God !" exclaimed Rousseau : and this exclamation of that not very godly soul is taken up by thousands, who protest that when they seek the Lord they will seek Him in their own way, without any fellow-mortal to conduct them, except it be one whose services they have expressly asked for, and can discard at pleasure. We need not travel far for a fact in confutation of this view. The existence of the University confutes it, and of every College in the University. There are a good many men who stand between the Undergraduate mind and the truth whereof that mind is assumed to be in quest. They stand there, not to thwart or bar the way, but as aids and guides. Were it not for their mediation and their regulating control, we should have a herd, I cannot say of students, but of a few intellectual oddities, going silly over private study, on the one hand, and on the other, hundreds of what Herodotus (ii. 32) calls παῖδες ὑβρισταί,—or as Homer calls them, (Od. vi. 120),

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“violent and wild, not just either, or friendly to strangers :” they would make Cambridge a place unsafe for a peaceable man to come near, and their occupation would be anything but the worship of the Muses. Why so many men between my intellect and truth ? To show my intellect the best way to truth, also to spur on my laziness not to loiter on the way. This is the office, this the need, of an academic polity, an organised body of teachers, and a code of scholastic law, in every multitude who profess to learn. And as without an academic polity, we should develop faddists and rioters, so without an ecclesiastical polity religion would be the occupation of a few fanatics of the Gifted Gilfillan type, and would be ordinarily neglected of the many.

Music may be styled, in Aristotelian phrase, a “property” of human nature : but religion is of the essence of humanity. An excellent man may be no musician : it is a pardonable defect : but a man wholly void of religion is undeserving of the name he bears, having obliterated in himself one main distinction between man and brute. Human nature is essentially religious. Again, it is essentially social. The dictum of Aristotle, that man is a “social animal,” is received with applause in this age, when everything is done by companies and societies and boards and syndicates and leagues and governing bodies. Rousseau’s “noble savage” is ruled out of order and reality. Being essentially social, and essentially religious, man must carry his social habits into his religion. That is to say, man must form religious society, as he forms civil society. But there is no society without government, and no government without a polity. There must then be a religious society, or *ecclesia*, Church polity, ecclesiastical polity.

There is room for a great book on Politiology, or a description of the various polities that have actually existed, ancient and modern, civil and religious. Where men are left without revelation, it is necessary to create religious authorities by the side of the civil power, as was done with much elaboration in the Roman Republic, and



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in ancient Mexico, in India and Japan : I may mention also the Druids in this island. Two religions have been successively revealed from heaven, the Jewish and the Christian. In both cases the revelation has embraced, besides certain doctrines, also a certain religious polity. We may no more subvert the government of the Pope and Bishops than we may deny the Trinity. If the one has been revealed by God, the other has been instituted by God. To controvert either is to rebel against God. Like every other government, the ecclesiastical polity instituted by the Divine Founder of our religion presses more upon those who in some manner hold office under it. I mean, the clergy are more governed and commanded and controlled than the laity. What binds the laity, binds the clergy : and for every Church precept binding priest and layman alike, there are two others binding the priest alone. No priest who fulfils the obligations of his state can be accused of laying burdens on others and not touching them with a finger himself. The yoke of ecclesiastical discipline and tradition is heaviest of all upon the Pope's shoulders. It is however a yoke and a felt reality to every Catholic layman. We say to those who think of joining us : "Don't you become a Catholic, unless you are ready to be spiritually governed." The warning is appropriate and just.

You see for yourselves how limited, how occasional, how pure an exercise of self-will, is the obedience which the average Church of England layman pays to his Church, or thinks that he ought to pay. True, the "good Queen" who put that Church on its present footing intended things quite otherwise. There was to be one religion alone in the land, with Her Grace at the head of it. Men were fined for not resorting to the parish church on Sundays. The law was solicitous about the consumption of fish in Lent. There were articles of religion to sign, and declarations to make against other religions. Private religious rites, surrounded with all the secrecy of home, were pried into, and punished. But the nation had not broken from the Pope of Rome to obey other papal mandates issuing

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from Greenwich or Windsor. Under Elizabeth, began the long history of Protestant Dissent and the Nonconformist conscience. The effect of the movement called the Reformation, initiated in the sixteenth century by the Crown, consummated in the seventeenth by the Long Parliament, has been the emancipation of the layman from the control of the Church. The ecclesiastical polity remained as Elizabeth had made it, but it became impotent to govern the people. And after an era of fanaticism, while Puritanism flourished, which was one form of religious anarchy, irreligion, the second and final form, has set in.

We see the multitudes in our large cities *scattered, as sheep having no shepherd* (Matt. ix. 36), like the multitudes whom our Lord compassionated. What these men want is governing : they need to be spiritually governed, not tyrannised over by that most odious of all tyrannies, a spiritual tyranny, but they need to be brought under His authority who is at once King and Saviour, who rules in order to save. His authority means the authority which He has established in His Church. It is vain to pretend that these multitudes are ruled by Conscience. Their conscience is benumbed by ignorance, all awry and contorted with false teaching and evil habits. At best, Conscience is not a perfect, distinct entity from the man whose conscience it is, and of itself it cannot rule him perfectly. Conscience needs to be informed and strengthened from without, by magistrate, moralist, preacher, and also by confessor, as Christ intended. The Sacrament of Penance is called "the tribunal of conscience." Conscience is there the accuser : the law there administered is the law binding the conscience of the individual : the absolution is an acquittal in conscience. Every Catholic Christian, from the Sovereign Pontiff to the school-boy, kneels at the bar of that tribunal. There is no distinction of ranks there as there will be none before the tribunal of God. The confessional is an essential feature of the Catholic Church polity. Never do we feel the hand of Church authority over us so sensibly as when we go to confession. Consequently, that great overthrow of Church authority, which styled

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itself the Reformation, had done nothing, had it not overthrown the confessional, substituting, for the benefit of timorous consciences, a voluntary consultation with a godly minister, who might afterwards pronounce an opinion of the pardon of the sin by faith in God's word. The logical position of the many zealous Anglican clergymen who are restoring, so successfully, the use of confession, would be far stronger, if they would but openly avow, what I fancy not a few of them think in their hearts, that the Reformation was a mistake, and they want to repair it. The Reformation really was a cry, *We will not have this man to reign over us* (Luke xix. 14) by the spiritual authorities which He has commissioned to represent Him : *we have no king but Cæsar* (John xix. 15 ; cf. xviii. 36, 37). The confessional is the restoration of Church authority, to the undoing of the Reformation. Accordingly men who will not part with the liberty, or license, which their forefathers won, speak and write the language of anger and alarm at the re-assertion of the obligation of confession. Men who have never been to confession in their lives dilate with confidence on the deleterious effects of confession, and point in proof to the moral degradation of Catholic populations who have given up the practice.

But I must not run into controversy. Members of that great *Universitas*, the *Universa Ecclesia*, the Catholic Church, we have every facility to approach God in private prayer, without which all our church-going would be an empty show ; but our approaches to God are guided and stimulated by an efficient, working ecclesiastical polity, or form of Church government. We live, priests and laymen, under Church control : else we should not be Catholics. We feel that control in the confessional, we feel it in the commandments of the Church. A good Catholic may be defined as one who keeps the commandments of the Church.

## CONFERENCE XXV : A RELIGION WITHOUT A CREED

“**D**EMOCRACY is a fine region to seek a polity in, because, owing to the license that it affords, it contains all manner of polities. I really think, if any one wanted to found a city, he could not do better than visit some city enjoying a democratic constitution. Coming to such a bazaar of polities, he could pick out the style that pleased him, and found his city according to the selected variety. Yes, I dare say, he would find no lack of specimens ” (*Republic* 557 D). England at the present day is a παντοπώλιον, or “bazaar,” of creeds. And as Plato’s ironical language meant that a democracy is not far removed from anarchy, so a modern observer might pronounce that England comes near to being creedless. On the other hand, there is still a vast force of vague religious sentiment and strong spiritual yearnings in the country. This spectacle of a nation, loving religion and abhorring creeds, calls for our study.

Not a creed in the Catholic sense, because not held in dutiful submission to any authority, and not definitely formulated, but a substitute for a creed, that is winning favour all around us, may be drawn out in the following articles :

1. A vague recognition of something that may be called God, something the chief attributes of which are vastness and unknowableness, but which we may venture to describe as “a power above man, making for righteousness.”

2. A belief in evolution and in the indefinite perfectibility of the human race.

3. A resolution to maintain morality on social grounds, and the authority of Conscience in the individual.

4. A respect and regard for Christ as man, the divinest and godliest of men, but not the Risen Jesus, and not God.

5. The Bible to be treasured up on the same shelf with Homer and Plato and Dante and Shakespeare, and subject to the same criticism.



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6. A surmise of some sort of consciousness to continue after death. But for this surmise, which he professed to hold as a firm belief, the late Lord Tennyson once told a friend that he would at once throw himself from the top of a cliff on which they were standing.

7. (A negative article). No Popery and no Sacerdotalism anywhere, least of all in any established Church.

Every positive creed must be negative too. To hold any article definitely and firmly, as of faith, is to anathematise some definite proposition, the logical contradictory of that article. But there may be a creed, or quasi-creed, principally negative, its strength consisting in certain firm denials. Such a creed cannot conduce to heaven : we cannot ascend thither upon a series of negations : but it may be a potent destructive force upon earth. Such was Mohammedanism, with its war-cry : "There is but one God, and Mohammed is His prophet." Meant at first as a protest against the polytheism predominant in Arabia, this cry came to mean that Jesus Christ was not God, nor even the chosen of all the prophets of God : it was the cry of a sort of militant Unitarianism. And multitudes who have scarce any positive belief at all, are trumpets of no uncertain sound to bray "No Popery."

Again we may consider creeds as emotional or dogmatic. The Catholic Creed is both one and the other, dogmatic first, and building up emotion on dogma. This is the work of ritual and of all the externals of religion. But religion is lost, when it trusts to mere emotion and mere ritual, without definite dogmas and firmly held articles of faith. Without that basis, having only emotion to build upon, you cannot "make a meditation," you can only lapse into a reverie. A reverie is not a practical thing : it does not determine to action, it throws no light on conduct, it begets no principle, it imparts no form to the will. A "meditation" does all these things : I use the word as St. Ignatius employs it, and as it has become a technical term of religion among Catholics. Only upon a dogmatic creed can you make meditations ; and meditations are the machinery of translation by which the force of

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religious spirit is brought to bear steadily and regularly upon conduct.

A religion without a creed has been compared to a body without bones. In such a body, there would be no point of attachment for the muscles, and consequently no orderly activity, nothing but idle palpitations. So without a creed, you have spasms of religious emotion ; you cannot have a life methodically guided by religion. It is easy for an irreligious mind to be creedless. The irreligious mind is not *carried round by every wind of doctrine* (Eph. iv. 14), simply because it is fast anchored to the things of this world, and the breath of religion plays upon it in vain. Religious-minded people suffer for want of a creed. They are in the predicament that St. Paul describes. Their religious views are the views of the last novel they have read, or the last eloquent preacher that they have listened to, of whatever denomination. And their views remain views, devoid of action, except now and then an impulsive subscription to a purpose which they have not well considered.<sup>1</sup> Like the Athenians of old, with their policy of impulse, so fatal to empire, they are "slaves to every strange conceit suggested to them" (*δοῦλοι ὄντες τῶν αἰεὶ ἀτόπων*. Thuc. iii. 38). Like burrs, they go stuck on to the coat of the last energetic person who has made his way through their midst.

The first Christians called a creed, a *σύμβολον*, or "watchword," as we still call it a "symbol." When a religious teacher approached them, they put this watchword to him. If he gave the proper response, they accepted and listened to him. But if he was a stranger to the watchword, they, according to St. Paul's and St. John's advice, avoided him as a heretic (Titus iii. 10 ; 2 John 7-11). The use of a creed as a watchword or test well appears in these verses: *Brethren, believe not every spirit : but prove the spirits whether they be of God*. The proof is not by an exercise of critical faculties, or private judgment, but by comparison of the new teaching with the received tradition of faith, with the *symbol*, or creed. Thus.

<sup>1</sup> "The Englishman is puzzled, but still subscribes" (Lord Beaconsfield).

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*Many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby is known the spirit of God : every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God ; and every spirit which undoeth Jesus is not of God ; and this is anti-christ* (1 John iv. 1-3). The second article of the Creed, containing the doctrine of the Incarnation, was to be applied as a test to any one who came to lecture on the Incarnation ; and so of the other articles. I insist on this, because you will sometimes hear from persons who ought to know better, that the early Church was not dogmatic, or that the New Testament does not enforce any creed. To such persons I should answer, *tolle, lege*. Take and read Matt. xxviii. 19, 20 ; John xiv. 26 ; xvi. 13 ; 1 Cor. xv. 12-14 ; 1 Tim. i. 19, 20 ; vi. 3, 4, 20, 21 ; 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18 ; Gal. i. 8 ; Col. ii. 8. Christ would have all nations brought to a state of discipleship : they are to hear all the message that He has left for them, and to that purpose the Holy Spirit is to bring back all the details of the message to the memory of the Apostles, and they are to teach the world : the Holy Spirit is to guide them to all truth, which supposes in their hearers a corresponding obligation to accept the truth : no Christian may disbelieve in the resurrection of Christ, or in the general resurrection : Hymenæus and others who made the resurrection of the body a mere moral renovation are denounced as a plague-spot in the Christian community : an angel from heaven is to be held accursed, if he teaches other doctrine than that which Paul has taught : Christians are not to be ensnared by philosophy. These are marks of a teaching body, definite, authoritative, and assent-compelling. When heresies arose, as they speedily did, they were precisely stated, and met by the Church with precise counter statement. Each party claimed to have the truth, and accused the other of moral obliquity in departing from it. Protestantism, for the first century of its existence, condemned others as vehemently as it was itself condemned. Protestants doubted whether Catholics could be saved. Creeds and confessions of faith and articles were made and re-made and fought about. So much at

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least of the old spirit of the Church continued, that no Christian dreamt of such a thing as a creedless, undogmatic religion. For Christianity is a creed, or it is naught.

I believe it is going to blow hard in the religious world. Not that I exactly anticipate imprisonments and martyrdoms : we may not travel further than confiscation and exile on the road to violence. But I look forward to, indeed we already see on foot, a general revolt of human intellect against all authority claiming to bind it in the name of God (cf. 2 Thess. ii. 3-8). The sheer paganism of creedless religion inspires our leading newspapers and reviews : it is taught in school and university : it pervades all classes of society. On the other hand, Christianity is not dead, but heresies are perishing. Catholic truth is being uncovered to the public gaze, as on Good Friday the cross is uncovered and lifted up for all to see. Men are waking from the sleep of inadvertence, inconsistency, easy-going, toleration and indifference, and are taking sides, for one definite creed as taught by Christ and His Church, or against all creeds whatsoever. A collision is preparing between these two contradictory tendencies of thought, and the shock, when it comes, will be tremendous. It will unseat and overthrow every believer, who does not understand his creed well, and cling to it with loving tenacity.



## CONFERENCE XXVI : THREE JOYS OF EASTER

**H**AVE we any faith, any love for Christ our Lord ? Yes, we have faith : our friends may make themselves quite easy about us on that score. We are no saints, but we are not heathens : we are baptized Christians : and so far as He will deign to allow us and to accept our love, we do love our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Then we can enter into the joy of the Church at this season. But it is well that as our religion comforts us in sorrow, it should also chasten our joys by leavening them with some of the joy of the Lord, and of the Church His Bride. Holy Church now is almost boisterous in her expressions of joy. The numerous alleluias of the Office are not the private devotion of the clerics who recite them : they are the cry of the whole Church in whose name they are said. They utter and declare your Christian joy. Easter is the making of every feast in the year. Without the Resurrection we are undone, we are *of all men most pitiable* (1 Cor. xv. 19). Good Friday, with no Easter Sunday following it, would destroy the Incarnation, and wreck the happiness of Christmas. It would make the Church an impossibility, as a headless body cannot possibly live, and the Church is headless without the living Christ. Thus there would be no Holy Ghost given to the Church, and no Pentecost. I need scarce observe, that if Christ were not risen and living, we could not have His Flesh and Blood in the Holy Eucharist : no Easter, no Corpus Christi. Easter Day is well called in the Martyrology *solemnitas solemnitatum* : it gives being to all other solemnities, and bears in its bosom all their joys.

Easter means that the Word Incarnate, God and Man, lives again, in glory for evermore. His glory is that of the Only-begotten of the Father. It was His from birth. At Christmas we called His name *Emmanuel, Wonderful, the Mighty God* (Isaias vii. 14; ix. 6). And He lay in a manger,

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with no visible sign of Godhead about Him, liable to all human wants. And He grew up in poverty and the labours of an artisan. Afterwards He went out and showed His glory by miracles : but these displays of power were passing events : the lowliness and simplicity of His ordinary life was unaffected by them. He went beyond simplicity, plainness, and obscurity : He became hated and calumniated, persecuted and outraged : in the end He fell into the hands of enemies, they seized Him, scourged Him, nailed him to a cross, and there He died, forsaken apparently of God and man. Was this Emmanuel, God with us ? The day of His Resurrection proved that it was. That day He was shown forth as the Son of God. To that day St. Paul applies the text of the second Psalm : *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee* (Acts xiii. 33). *This day* is not the eternity of His generation from the Father, for it is spoken to Him, not as God, but as Man. And although these words form the Introit of the Christmas midnight Mass, they do not in their proper sense point to His birth of the Virgin Mary. They are Easter rather than Christmas words : *this day* is the first Easter Sunday, and all succeeding Easter Sundays as commemorations of the first. This day, drawing Him forth from the tomb, and investing Him with the glory proper to His Divinity, the Eternal Father acknowledges His Son made man, proclaims Him and crowns Him equal to Himself, *immortal king of ages* (1 Tim. i. 17).

The chroniclers of Edward III.'s reign tell us how on the field of Crecy the king took post in the rear of the battle, and sent his son Edward the Black Prince, to lead the van of the army against the enemy. The Prince was hard pressed in the fight, and sent to his father to come to his aid. "No," replied King Edward : "let the boy win his spurs." One can imagine, when the day was over, the king meeting his son, with the flush of victory on the boy's face, and how the royal father takes him by the hand and says to him : "Now I know you for my son : this day you have proved yourself the heir of our house, a true

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Plantagenet." You may take this example for what it is worth : but it has helped me to realise St. Paul's application of the text, *Thou art my Son : this day have I begotten thee*. This then is the first of Easter joys, the showing forth of Jesus Christ as God. St. Ignatius puts it thus : "the Divinity, which seemed to hide itself in the Passion, appears and shows itself now miraculously in the holy Resurrection by its true and holy effects." There are no such good tidings anywhere, there is no such cause of joy to man, as the declaration that Jesus Christ is God.

Again, St. Paul tells us, Jesus Christ is marked out Son of God by the resurrection of the dead (Rom. i. 4). This tells of another joy of Easter, our resurrection from the dead ; which resurrection is again a sign of the Divinity of our Redeemer. Yes, it will be a sign, when it happens : but how could St. Paul point to it as a sign in his day, when even to our time it remains a hope unfulfilled ? Because the resurrection of Christ, the Head, carries with it the resurrection of us, His members. He is *the first-fruits of them that sleep* (1 Cor. xv. 20). It was *impossible that death should hold him* (Acts ii. 24), or that it should finally hold us who belong to Him. Death was overcome on Easter Day by Christ for Himself and for us : and though death has not yet yielded up his conquests, and daily conquers more and more, the enemy only conquers to give back again in the day when he shall be himself despoiled. *O death, where is thy victory ?* (1 Cor. xv. 55). Daily won, it cannot last : death's final reverse is a foregone conclusion.

There are moments when we are weary of existence, and feel as though we should be glad if death and nothingness could devour us entirely, soul and body. Oftener, perhaps, usually, we think that if only our soul can creep into some nook and corner of quiet happiness after death, it matters not what becomes of our poor body : let it perish, we have done with it, and are well rid of it. But God is a father who insists on providing for His child on an ampler scale and with greater magnificence than the child appreciates or desires. Naturally, the soul were well enough without the body, but not supernaturally. The resurrection

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of the body to glory is a gift given us in Christ. And a welcome gift too. None of us, I dare say, has gone through a long day of muscular exercise without reflecting on the wonderful strength and endurance of the human body, its energy and agility, when at its best. If it could only be maintained at its best ! Then there is the beauty of the human form in actual life, and in the creations of art, in sculpture and in painting, ancient and modern. Again, we think sadly how

Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth,  
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow.

*Sed mutabitur*, says Seneca in a letter, after remarking on the good looks of a handsome slave. True, the ideal of art does not change, and the race remains : as one individual fades away, another flourishes in his stead. But the race is only a succession of individuals, one after another all fading and perishing, like the leaves of last year's spring. Artists have felt this sad recurrence of decay, and have preferred for subjects of their master-pieces either deities, who at least were immortal, if not otherwise very godly, or saints, the heirs of immortality and incorruption. The thought of the resurrection of the body should be an aid to the artist : it should exalt and purify his conceptions, and encourage him in the execution of them. There is in every face, if we could only catch it, a look which the wearer ought to wear, when raised to immortality. The look is more on the surface in youth, but it may be deepened and perfected by age. True idealism catches that expression.

The disembodied spirit is not man, though it is probably all that would survive of man in the natural order. But for the resurrection of the body, the motive of the Incarnation assigned in the Nicene Creed, " for us men and for our salvation," would come to this, " for our souls and their salvation." As it is, it would be heresy to substitute the second phrase for the first and proclaim it adequate. Christ is the Saviour of men, not merely of men's souls. He became man, and died, and rose again, to save our



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entire humanity. This is the second joy of Easter, a very human joy, that Easter involves *carnis resurrectionem*, the resurrection of our flesh.

I have not yet done with this our second joy. Hymenæus and Philetas taught that the resurrection of the body was accomplished already (2 Tim. ii. 17, 18), in the conversion of men to Christianity. Their heresy consisted in the denial of any further resurrection of the flesh, once dead and buried and resolved into dust. The conversion of men from paganism to a Christian life is however the first stage of the resurrection of their bodies to glory. The flesh is partially glorified by being baptized. It is glorified by being sanctified, by being incorporated with Christ, by becoming the temple of the Holy Spirit of God. Therefore a baptized man, living up to the grace of his baptism, and avoiding in particular those sins *proper to the body*, or done *through the body* (2 Cor. v. 10) whereby baptismal grace is most easily and commonly lost,—such a one walks in the likeness of Christ risen (cf. Rom. vi. 4-12), and in him the resurrection of the flesh has already its initial accomplishment. In the multitude of such men, diffused through all ages and places since the planting of the Church, Jesus Christ is shown forth as Son of God by resurrection of the dead (Rom. i. 4; Acts xxvi. 23; Eph. ii. 1-7; John v. 25), not as by an event fulfilled only in promise and potency, but by an event that has its fulfilment daily in the life of every good Christian. We have one and all of us the power of showing forth our Saviour as the Son of God by living in the likeness of His resurrection.

The third joy of Easter is the complement and corrective of a great sorrow. It is a great sorrow to think that Easter comes and goes, leaving such multitudes of men dead in their sins, and rotting away in their paganism. To them Easter has no spiritual significance; it is simply an occasion for a holiday, for a cheap trip, for a bout of self-indulgence beyond usual limits. The thought of this unhappy pagan world might be a great curtailment of our Easter joy but for this consideration, that along with the

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fact of Christ's Resurrection the Apostles were further *commanded to testify to the people that this is he who is ordained of God to be judge of the living and of the dead* (Acts x. 42 ; cf. i. 11 ; iii. 21 ; xvii. 31 ; xxiv. 15). Everywhere the future Judgment was announced in the same breath with the recently accomplished Resurrection and Ascension. This means that Christ is made Head of all mankind ; and will vindicate His Headship over all men, either with their free consent or in despite of their resistance. He comes forth from the tomb triumphant and resistless. *Not yet do we see all things subjected to him* (Heb. ii. 8) : but *he must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet* (1 Cor. xv. 25). *Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in the heaven ; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn ; and they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds with power and great majesty* (Matt. xxiv. 30). *And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day* (Isaias ii. 11, 17). This resistless might of the Saviour whom we love and whose honour we have at heart, is the culmination of our Easter joys.

“ I will make all things well ; and all things shall be well ; and thou shalt see that I will make all things well.” If we may trust the revelations of Mother Julian of Norwich, these words were often spoken by Our Lord to an anxious and enquiring English heart. He asks us to join hands with Him in making all things well. We all need encouragement : of all things we need encouragement most. We have the encouragement of His present victory, the earnest of a future conjoint triumph, His and ours. *Wherefore, beloved brethren*, concludes St. Paul, *as the moral of his discourse on the Resurrection, be ye always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not vain in the Lord* (1 Cor. xv. 58).

## CONFERENCE XXVII : RELIGION IN THE MODERN NOVEL

I CANNOT agree with the proposition,—it seems to me not historically true,—certainly it is not according to the mind of the Catholic Church to say, that preaching was the invention of an age in which people read either not at all or with difficulty, and that in a reading age like ours sermons are out of place, unnecessary, and to be abolished. Holy Church is not likely to abolish them. The Church has ever attached special efficacy to the spoken word of God, so that, of two discourses equal in all other respects, we should expect the discourse uttered aloud by an authorised person from the pulpit to bear more spiritual fruit than the discourse read privately at home. If instead of coming here to address you, I had my Conference printed, and a copy posted to each of you on Saturday night, first, I should have grave doubts about your reading it : secondly, I say, the reading would not do you as much good as the spoken word, the text being the same : the reason is, because the word is not merely composed but spoken with authority. Those people who complain of sermons are not conspicuous for diligence in spiritual reading : what they do read is the modern novel, and that often in great profusion. I am not here to attack novels, novel-reading, and novelists. The novelist is become a greater power perhaps than the preacher ; and he sometimes usurps the preacher's office : we have the religious novel, and the anti-religious novel. Because contraries are in the same genus, as logicians say, we will call them both by one name, whether they labour to build up or to subvert religion : we will speak of both as the “ religious novel.” The religious novel, I fear, is not often a success. It supposes a combination that is rare. Either the novel or the religion is apt to be at fault. Where the former fails, the production is simply dull and

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harmless. But where the latter fails, where the genius of the novelist exists unwedded to any true understanding of religion, and yet religion is made the theme of the novel, the production may be commercially successful enough, but is morally dangerous, at least to the uneducated and untrained. It is of this dangerous variety of the religious novel that I wish to speak.

The danger of the uneducated mind is that of taking appearance for reality ; of accepting for fact not what it has seen, but what it has fancied ; of being led into captivity by rhetoric ; of believing assertions because they are bold and startling. Such a mind unconsciously treats novels as the historian treats State-papers, builds up inductions on them, taking the sayings and doings there set down and the characters there described, for the sayings and doings and characters of real men and women. The educated mind recognises fiction for fiction, and keeps it apart from history. I remember seeing the prospectus of a school, in which one of the subjects taught was "handling wool." Wool there was a staple of education : the boys were taught to discriminate wool from wool, better from worse. The lesson was truly educational, so far as it went. We should learn how to handle fiction.

The novel has after all an historical value. Though the particular characters and careers, which the novelist portrays, are fictitious, yet they represent, often faithfully enough, the sort of man that we meet with in real life, and the sort of things that he will say and do : thus we may improve our acquaintance with fact by reading fiction. We must remember that the novelist enjoys the licence of a caricaturist. As the comic papers reproduce the likenesses of our cabinet ministers with every feature exaggerated, so may the novelist exaggerate beyond anything that is found in the existing world. No clerical tutor in any Scotch family was ever quite so absurd as the immortal Dominie. Enough for Sir Walter Scott, that one or two specimens, whom he may have encountered, had some eccentricities pointing that way. Sometimes for humour, sometimes for pathos, sometimes to excite admiration,



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sometimes to inspire loathing, the novelist, and also the dramatist, may paint men better or worse, more whimsical, more unfortunate (if that is possible) than living men ever are.

But while we allow exaggeration and heightening of character, we must condemn inconsistency and psychological impossibilities. The freedom of the will is a limited freedom : it is checked by natural disposition, by acquired habits, by environment, by motives. We can predicate of ourselves and of our neighbours a hundred things that we might do in the abstract, but which any one who knows us can predict with moral certainty that we never shall do. This line of behaviour we are sure will never be assumed by a shy and reserved man, nor that by a virtuous man, nor that again by a niggardly man, nor that by a gentleman. Did we see him assume it, we should surmise that he had been drinking, or that his mind was giving way. All the value of the testimony of witnesses to character turns on the reliability of these judgments of psychological impossibility.

Here we have carefully to watch our novelist ; and as a dissertation on novels in general is not my intention, nor even becoming in this sacred place, I say that the religious novelist must be particularly watched, not to keep him out of the pitfall, for he has taken his own course, but that we may not follow him in his fall into a psychological impossibility. I will take an example. The hero of a religious novel, whom we will call Titus Tatius, begins life as a firm believer in the Divinity of our Blessed Lord. Afterwards he abandons that fundamental point, and all profession of Christianity. Titus Tatius walks out at morn or dewy eve into the fields ; he feels that Christ is near him, that he is united with Christ, that he has found Christ the Man better for having renounced the Son of God. Now this, I venture to say, is simple nonsense. The feeling, if he has it, of Christ being near him, is mere delusion, and will not last long. According to the new position which he has taken up, Christ is not near him, any more than Plato is near him : he is no more united

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with Christ than he is with Socrates. His denial of the Word made Flesh will augment neither his esteem nor his love of the Son of Mary : quite the reverse. The impressiveness of Christ in the gospels is the sense of something about Him more than human. Quench that sense by denial, and you have undone the gospels. Titus Tatius will presently deny the authenticity of the gospel record ; and, apart from the gospels, what can he know of Jesus of Nazareth ?

The old novelists of the Romance School, and the modern Penny Dreadful, treat us to a succession of startling events, murders, shipwrecks, fires, explosions, apparitions. The modern religious novelist harries us with a series of acute crises of feeling. Something is allowable on the score of the novelist's license to caricature : but the best novelists of all times have avoided these catastrophes of thought and of action. Sensational religion, not religion pure and undefiled, is this novelist's theme. Healthy religion flows on like a river, such a river as the Saône rather than the Rhone, to borrow Burke's comparison : but the religious novelist exhibits a succession of emotional cascades, shocks so violent as to exhaust the hero and bring his life to a premature close. That there should be emotion in religion, every Saint's life shows : that emotion may properly grow intense and bring about an agony and a salutary crisis, is evident to readers of the story of St. Augustine's conversion. Still, religion does not consist of emotions ; and emotional crises are dangerous things to pass through, and conduct quite as often to religious delusion as to religious truth. Yet such crises seem necessary for the interest of a religious novel. Another reason for reading novels of that class shrewdly and warily : else, sharing the hero's excitement, we may come to be involved in his error.

The religious novelist, to borrow a phrase of the Anglican Bible, "sitteth in the seat of the scornful." He, or she,—for there are lady graduates in the art of religious novel-writing,—gives you to understand that he has the learning of a Doctor of Divinity, and more wisdom ; that

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to him philosophy has given up its secrets ; that he knows Hebrew and Greek and Assyriology and all other such *adminicula* to the critical study of the Old and New Testament ; that for twenty years he has turned over the leaves of the Bible, and meditated and prayed upon its contents ; that he is an adept in Church History, and has read through and through at least one of the great Fathers or Doctors of the Church ; that he has also attended the sittings of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, and weighed the evidence adduced there for sundry modern miracles. People, who at the cost of the labour of half a lifetime, have acquired a handful or two of genuine knowledge of these matters, do not usually turn to novel-writing. But the religious novelist communicates unstintingly his treasures to the world, and that in a form which the half-educated will appreciate better than others whose insight has gone deeper. The intellectual strength of the Christian position indeed is considerable : to turn it, carry it, and take it altogether by storm, the novelist admits, requires long and elaborate argument : indeed the longer the argument becomes, and the more seriously it is undertaken, the further it seems to grow from being a refutation. But long and elaborate argument, the artist knows, cannot be inserted in a novel : that would be to kill the story and put in its place a tedious treatise. So “ results ” are stated with a light and airy confidence, results destructive of the old faith in Christ : as for arguments, the surface alone is flashed upon the reader, like people show you gold at the top of a purse, and then withdraw it from view, giving you to understand that down to the lowest depths the bag is heavy with the precious metal. The argument stops exactly where the difficulty arises, and where the strength of the opposing system would begin to be felt, if the discussion were carried further. I am not complaining of this : the law of novel-writing imposes such limitations : novels cannot be abstruse. I only marvel at the folly of those who expect to upset Christianity by a novel in the mind of any educated man. I only commiserate their lame habit of thought, who surrender their faith to a

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novel. In the department of Scripture studies I confess I am not greatly impressed with such phrases as "no reasonable man can doubt," "the ablest German exponent," etc. When I find the reasoning processes in certain passages of St. Paul's Epistles termed "the imperfect, half-childish products of the mind of the first century," I mentally move for a return of the number of hours of exact study which the author of that phrase has spent upon the fourth chapter of Galatians and the third chapter of the Second of Corinthians.

When a novelist undertakes to teach me, I look for his credentials. Often they are satisfactory enough. Sir Walter Scott as a young man roamed about the Lowlands on foot, conversing with the people, visiting their houses, gathering all the folk-lore of his native land. He read scores of ancient ballads with more avidity than he read law. He knew a good deal more of the Middle Ages than most men of his time. He shared with Shakespeare the power of piecing together ancient records and reconstructing historical characters. If you want to know old Scotland, and many other old lands besides, read Sir Walter Scott, and your general impressions will not be far wrong. Dickens and Thackeray knew London and London society, high and low. If the world lasts two thousand years more, Pickwick will be studied as we study Plautus, not for language and humour merely, but for what under all the exaggeration is there revealed of the living men of the time and their ways. And what are the credentials of the religious novelist? A question to be asked in each several case as it occurs. St. Paul speaks of men, *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the testaments, having no hope of the promise* (Eph. ii. 12). St. John recounts this promise: *I will give him a white counter (ivory tessera, or ticket, entitling to hospitality), and on the counter a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it* (Apoc. ii. 17). And does not our Lord say: *Neither doth any one know the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him* (Matt. xi. 27)? The sum is this, that faith in Christ is a special possession, a habit of



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mind which to them who have it not, and care not to come near it, is unknown and inconceivable. To borrow Newman's similitude, an outsider knows Christianity as you might know the stained glass windows in Great St. Mary's, studying them without and observing the contour of the figures, but never seeing them from within the church. You might be learned in the history of the windows, and the subjects which they represent, but you would be no judge of their artistic merit.<sup>1</sup> Or, like some civilians, you might have a passion for military history. With the amplest text and the most precise maps, you might follow the campaigns of Hannibal and Caesar, of Belisarius, of Montecuculi and Prince Eugene and Marlborough and Napoleon and Wellington and Lord Kitchener, and then vent your learning upon a private in the line, who had carried his rifle in Afghanistan. You would overwhelm the man with erudition, and at the same time reveal your ignorance of the actual workings of war. That comparatively uneducated man would have the better of you in military matters, because Tommy is a soldier and you are not. You too, inasmuch as you are an enrolled soldier of Christ, have the better in all practical religious issues of those who have never been in that service, whatever their learning. And the religious novelist is not always even learned.

If you are to read religious novels, read them with the caution of the old Doric poet whom Cicero loved to quote :

νᾶφε καὶ μέμνασ' ἀπιστεῖν, ἄρθρα ταῦτα τῶν φρενῶν.<sup>2</sup>

Read them as one *wise in Christ* (I Cor. iv. 10).

<sup>1</sup> "They, as it were, see the tapestry of human life on the wrong side of it" (Newman, *University Sermons*, xiii.)

<sup>2</sup> Be sober-minded, and remember to withhold your confidence : these are the pivots of good sense.

## CONFERENCE XXVIII : THE EXPECTANCY OF FAITH

SOME justification I feel is required both of my title and of my subject this morning. For the word "expectancy" I appeal to Shakespeare: "Every moment is expectancy of more arrivance." By "expectancy" I mean a state of expectation. Into such a state faith puts us, and keeps us expectant of another world and another life, according to the definition: *Faith is the substance*, or presentation, or bodying forth, *of things hoped for* (Heb. xi. 1). But this expectancy is more proper to a man getting on in years, as I am, than to those like yourselves, just entering upon life. I seem to have invited you from your own ground on to mine. My justification is my hope that on my own ground I may be better able to entertain you.

Am I rash in presuming that there may be among you a copy of the *Imitation of Christ*, which is read occasionally, five minutes at a time? No better spiritual reading, after the New Testament. The book was written in the cloister by an aged or aging man, and I cannot expect you to enter into all its sentiments except in some very transient mood. Take these two examples: "Whatever I can desire or think of for my consolation, I expect it not here but for the time to come" (iii. 16): "It is all a burden to me, whatever this world offers in the way of consolation" (iii. 48). Now you find consolation in many of the good things of this world, and many such things you look forward to enjoying. And quite right too, *only in the Lord* (1 Cor. vii. 39), according to His law. But in time, as God is preparing to take you from this world, He will gradually wean you from these things of earth, and make your aspirations centre more exclusively on Him. And doubtless there are moments of disenchantment even in the golden hours of youth, in which your heart goes out

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with longing to a better world. Expectancy of some sort is in the very nature of man. Rarely are we wholly plunged in enjoyment of the present, like boys enjoying a summer holiday. Boys at school look forward to the University : at the University you look forward to your degrees and to the careers that you destine for yourselves : officers and functionaries of all kinds have an eye to future promotion. They do not look forward, who have no prospect but the workhouse and a pauper's grave. They do not look forward, who have no time to think, quite overwhelmed and overborne in the struggle for daily bread. But these are unnatural conditions. Thought naturally runs ahead of the present position of the thinker. Thought cannot be confined to this world. And here we must be careful in our reckoning, not too much to vilify and circumscribe the cogitations of the poor. *He that approacheth God must believe that he is, and that he is a giver of reward to them that seek him* (Heb. xi. 6). This indispensable element of religion has been well planted in past ages in the hearts of our poor : except so far as their betters have untaught them, they still look to a reward after death. From the dealings of Providence in this world alone, *man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred : because all things happen alike to the just and the wicked, to the good and the bad* (Eccles. ix. 1, 2.) In the next world, the reward will be given, amply and evidently, apart from favour and interest, irrespectively of birth and education and wealth. This conviction of justice to be done one day by a Supreme Judge has for generations borne up the hearts of our English poor. May be, they may not prove so tolerant of the unequal distribution of this world's goods, when they shall come to lose their belief in a God who will finally deal with every man according to his personal deserts. This is *the patience of the poor* (Ps. ix. 19).

Furthest from any such patient expectation of judgment to come are the class of the active and prosperous rich. Men of this stamp are often immersed in this world at sixty, and regardless of any other world shortly to receive them. Judgment goes in their favour at present, and

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they have no thought of ever seeing it reversed. These are the least religious of mankind, and, spiritually, the most thoughtless. These are your true pagans. The true pagan is of a lower grade than Brahman, Buddhist, or Mohammedan. Those religions furnish expectations; however distorted, of a life to come, to many of their votaries a matter of extreme interest and a main object of endeavour. The true pagan erects a stone wall before his eyes, to prevent his looking over the margin of this earth. When he dies, he turns his face to this wall, and so passes away. The game is up, the brave show is over, the world has served his turn. As he perishes, so shall every man, so shall the entire race perish ; and some day humanity shall be no more. Such is his philosophy. It is difficult for a thoughtful man to be quite a pagan. A self-complacent and contented pagan he cannot be. We should say, the immortal spirit within him spurns the idea of annihilation, and dreads a futurity for which no provision is being made. Among all thinking men you find a restless solicitude about "dreams" that may come to trouble "that sleep of death," about the possible adventures of a spirit surviving in "that undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns."

In this solicitous speculation we see "free thought" at its weakest. By "free thought" I mean thought pursued for the exercise and delight of thinking, holding results attained to be of importance quite secondary to the process of enquiry, and spurning all claims of authority to guide one to truth. I do not deny the interest of free thought, nor its value as mental exercise. Hare and hounds in a paper-chase do not care where they run : enough for them a good scamper over the country, a full satisfaction of the appetite of muscular exercise, the healthiest and most innocent of the appetites of man. In many regions free thought is as innocent as Hare and Hounds, or Football. Let us have free thought by all means as to the composition of the Milky Way. Mankind will be the none worse for wild speculation upon nebulas. But when a physician approaches my bed-side, where I lie hovering



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between life and death, it is not his thinking power that I am chiefly interested in, not his ingenuity, not his adventurous daring : I hope he has got hold of the facts of my case, as they really are. I am anxious that the conclusions of his science be true : provided they be true, I do not care in the least how he has attained to them, whether by his own researches or by docile acceptance of the word of another. Here, where my life is at stake, I had rather my physician were right with Maccus and two old women than that he erred with Plato and the whole Royal Society. Even so it is with the prospect of a life to come beyond the interference of death. Results here are valuable, and results alone, the bare, sheer, sober truth, howsoever attainable : however humiliating be the process to our pride of intellect, we must creep, if need be, on hands and knees rather than err from the way of eternal salvation and stumble into hell.

The value of Christianity to a thoughtful mind is the definite and assured teaching which it provides in this way of eternal salvation. Christianity is a systematic method of saving our souls. That is its great aim and purpose, proclaimed from the first. *Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Where thy treasure is, there shall thy heart be also* (Matt. vi. 20, 21). *The expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God* (Rom. viii. 19). *He* (Abraham) *looked for a city whose builder and maker is God. They* (the patriarchs) *desire a better country, that is, a heavenly* (Heb. xi. 10, 16). *For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek for one to come* (Heb. xiii. 14). These were the thoughts of the Martyrs, as their Acts testify. These were the thoughts of the dwellers in monasteries, as the annals of monasticism abundantly reveal. I speak particularly of English monasticism, in which the prominence given to the idea of the joys of the life to come is very remarkable. They are the thoughts of the Church of all ages, and our own thoughts as Christians and Catholics.

We look for good or evil to follow upon our course through this world, according as we conduct ourselves, either way on an immense scale. We are not certain of

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our perseverance in good : we dread our own frailty and possible prevarication, and the punishment that would fall upon us if we died in sin. Yet on the whole we look forward cheerfully, even with longing desire, to the next world, as to the home of our everlasting happiness. This cheerfulness is grounded, not on our own merits and innocence, though we know that to avoid evil and do good are necessary conditions for us to fulfil ; but our confident hope of eternal salvation rests on the mighty means of sanctification which we possess in the Sacraments of the Church, and are determined ever faithfully to use. A Catholic loses his soul by ignoring or making light of the next world. If he does not make light of it, if his thoughts run a great deal on what is to happen to him after death, it hardly can be that he will not make use of the means that the Church affords him, and the directions which the Church gives him, for securing his eternity ; and using these means, and obeying these directions, he looks forward to eternity in the cheerful hope, that though *weeping stay to the evening* of life, yet *in the morning shall come gladness* (Ps. xxix. 6).

Thus the Christian life is a double life. *Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are modest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are holy, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good repute, every virtue, every praiseworthy observance* (Phil. iv. 8), all these things come back upon us, not as mere memories of a vanished past, but as treasures laid up in everlasting store. The young look forward in life, the old look back upon it : the young dwell in imaginations, the old in memories and recollections. But it would be unspeakably sad for an elderly man revisiting old scenes in thought, still more in bodily presence, did he not expect to regather in a better life all good things that he had seen there, all the good that he had done there, the loved ones that he had known there, yes and the sufferings that he had there endured.

A good subject for an essay, which I am not going to write at present, would be the effect of the expectancy of faith upon the temporal well-being of mankind. It strikes

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me in reading history that the people who have retarded even material civilisation and progress have not been churchmen and monks and pious Christians as such, but wild and factious nobles, profligate democracies, and churchmen unfaithful to the Church and turned into lovers of this world. If we want to be happy in the next world, we must serve God in this : now we serve God by doing our duty at our post in human society, cherishing and loving our fellow man. There is hardly a more unworldly and heavenly-minded Saint in the calendar than the great St. Basil. Yet this is what St. Basil did at Caesarea. Around the cathedral and the bishop's house he built other houses for the clergy, who were required to furnish hospitality to visitors : there was an infirmary and medical school : a home for the aged (not a workhouse) : there were special quarters for lepers : there were workshops, where even fine art was not neglected. These buildings were so extensive that the bishop was denounced to the governor of the province for building a rival city : years after his death it still bore the name of the Basiliad. When famine came, Basil collected subscriptions, bought provisions, and fed the poor, waiting upon them himself.<sup>1</sup> The story of Basil and the Basiliad has been repeated in cathedrals and monasteries without number, and is still re-enacted in our days.

I should propose as the subject of another essay, the effect upon human character and upon human happiness in this world of a total abolition of the Christian expectancy of faith, and a general acquiescence in the prospect of man's dying like a dog. Horace, poor benighted pagan, should then be re-edited :

*Omnis moriar, nullaue pars mei  
Vitabit Libitinam.*

All I shall die : not any part of me  
But what shall fall to undertaker's care.

The effect I anticipate would be the loss of all the pathos,

<sup>1</sup> *Saint Basile* par Paul Allard (Lecoffre, Paris, 1899) pp. 60, 61, 110, 111.

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softness, etherialness of life, and the reign of vulgarity and selfishness supreme. The reason why this effect is not yet apparent in many men who have resigned all idea of a future life, is because they are influenced by the society around them, and the tone of that society is kept up by believers in immortality.

The belief in the immortality of the soul and in the ultimate resurrection of the body, like other fundamental beliefs of Christianity, is getting more and more dependant upon the continued existence and presence amongst us of the Catholic and Roman Church. Thinking men are finding that out. If only men could think more and knew more, Catholicism would spread fast. Man cannot abide being a mere animal; and the alternative is becoming clearer between mere animalism and Catholicism.

### NOTE.

I append two quotations. The first is from Mark Pattison (*Suggestions on Academical Organisation*, p. 329) :

“ A Christian looks for a life beyond this life, and thinks that no theory of education can be perfect, which does not take account of that hope.”

And these are the significant concluding words of Mr. Lecky's *History of Rationalism* : “ But when we look back to the cheerful alacrity with which, in some former ages, men sacrificed all their material and intellectual interests to what they believed to be right; and when we realise the unclouded assurance that was their reward, it is impossible to deny that we have lost something in our progress.”



## CONFERENCE XXIX : MIRACLES, THEIR PLACE IN THE CHRISTIAN SYSTEM

“**M**IRACLES do not happen.” The statement has the merit of plainness, if not of truth. To establish it would be to subvert Christianity, which is founded, first, on the miracles of Christ our Saviour, more particularly His Resurrection and Ascension ; secondly, on the miracles done by the Apostles as evidence of their mission. The Church’s life began with the miracle of Pentecost ; and in the first age the giving of the Pentecostal gift was always accompanied by a display, more or less abundant, of miraculous powers. See Acts x. 44-46 ; xix. 6 ; 1 Cor. xiv. If it is true for all time that miracles do not happen, then Church and Bible are false. Therefore I may meet the statement briefly and peremptorily thus : “ Don’t tell me that miracles do not happen ; it is heresy ; my faith assures me of the contradictory.” I may also proceed by the roundabout process of disputation, and demand a proof of this universal negative proposition. I do accordingly demand a proof, and further, a proof in syllogistic form. Even though the syllogism be not the type of reasoning, it is at least, as Mill allows, “ the test of reasoning.” The power of reducing your own, or your adversary’s position, into syllogistic form is one of the greatest natural safeguards against deception. Syllogistically, these are the proofs forthcoming for the thesis, that miracles do not happen :

I. What I have never seen, does not happen. But I have never seen a miracle : therefore.

II. A violation of nature’s laws does not happen. But a miracle is a violation of nature’s laws : therefore.

III. What is never attested by other than incompetent witnesses, does not happen. But a miracle is never attested by other than incompetent witnesses : therefore.

The third syllogism must stand over for next Sunday’s

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Conference. The first syllogism will not detain us long : the second will be our main theme of discussion this morning.

I. We admit the minor premise of the first syllogism. I suppose none of us have ever witnessed a miracle. Nay, we have no hankering after miracles. We had rather merit the blessing of those *who have not seen, and yet have believed* (John xx. 29). Miracles, we know, are *a sign, not to believers but to unbelievers* (1 Cor. xiv. 22 ; cf. John iv. 48 ; Matt. xii. 39). The sight of miracles is not part of the ordinary providence of salvation : the main high road to heaven is good enough for us. But as for the major premise, it perishes as soon as it is born to light. It reminds one of some rhymes put in the mouth of a celebrated Oxford man :

Whatever is, I know it ;  
What I don't know, isn't knowledge ;  
And I'm the Master of this College.

Therefore the defendants of the position are careful to leave this premise unstated : " whatever is, I know it." An interesting specimen of the numerous group of Fallacies of suppressed major.

II. The usual method of meeting the second syllogism is to allow the minor, and deny the major premise. Thus Cardinal Newman :

I firmly believe that saints in their lifetime have before now raised the dead to life, crossed the sea without vessels, multiplied grain and bread, cured incurable diseases, and superseded the operation of the laws of the universe in a multitude of ways.<sup>1</sup>

You must not be shocked, you must wait till all explanations are given, and then judge. I am prepared to let pass the major that a violation of nature's laws does not happen, and deny the minor. I say that a miracle is not a violation of nature's laws. I explain my meaning by a story. Call it a legend, if you will : I only want it for an illustration. St. Joseph of Cupertino, I think it was, the Conventual Franciscan friar, worked so many miracles,

<sup>1</sup> *Present Position of Catholics*, Lect. vii. § 8. I could wish Newman's §§ 7, 8, read in here.

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and drew such crowds, as to disturb the peace of his convent. The Father Guardian therefore put the Saint under obedience not to work any more miracles without his permission. One day Joseph was watching a building, when suddenly he saw a man slip from a high scaffolding. He wanted to save the man ; at the same time he could not think of being disobedient ; so in his simplicity he cried to the falling man : “ Stay where you are, till I run and get leave for a miracle.” The story goes on that the man’s body remained suspended in mid-air, till Joseph reappeared with the requisite permission, and took him softly down. If the body did remain in mid-air, it was a great miracle. That is the one point that we need of the narrative.

If the man had fallen from the same height into an outstretched and yielding sheet, he might have taken no harm : the force of gravitation would still have tended to drag him to the earth, but would have been counteracted by the resisting medium of the canvas. Substitute for that medium some sustaining angel : gravitation acts as before but this time there is an angel counteracting it, a miraculous support, procured at the intercession of a Saint. But for all that there is no violation of any law of nature in this case any more than in the former. In both cases the equilibrium procured is the mechanical resultant of all the forces acting upon the body. The one peculiarity of the miracle is the intervention of a hyperphysical force. I call it “ hyperphysical ” to denote the source from whence it proceeds ; for angels are not in the purview of physical science. But if we consider the term upon which the force acts, namely, the man’s body, in that view the sustaining power of the angel works a physical effect exactly the same as that of a piece of sustaining canvas. There is no law of physical nature, that hyperphysical forces, such as angels, or God Himself, shall never interfere. Were there such a law, human activity would have to be brought down into the category of mere physical action. The design of King’s College Chapel, Paradise Lost, Newton’s *Principia*, would be physical effects, belonging to the same order as

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earthquakes. Milton and Wellington would be complicated mechanisms, curiously constructed clocks, ticking out poetry, or orders of the day for battle. This is one way of abolishing miracles, and much else besides. It is a sort of philosophical chauvinism, reducing all agents and agencies to one dead level.

We contend for a hierarchy of agents, mechanical, chemical, electrical, vital, sensitive, intelligent ; and again, human and angelic : and above all, divine. These agents work one above another, not superseding but checking one another. They have their several laws and established modes of action, which are not violated, but the action of one may be counteracted by the action of another, and so the course of events is altered from what it would have been, and yet no law is broken.

There were two worlds in the Platonic philosophy, the Intelligible world and the Visible world, or the world of Ideals and the world of Sensible Appearances. The world of Ideals, of ideal Beauty, and ideal Equality and ideal Good, and so of the rest, was said to be the world of Realities : the world of sensible experience was the world of Shadows, poor, fleeting, imperfect copies of those eternal Ideas. I am not concerned with explaining or defending this doctrine. But it was not wholly false ; and it served as some prelude and preparation for Christianity. To a Christian also there are two worlds, the Unseen and the Seen, the Spiritual and the Material, the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of this World, Heaven and Earth, —or if you like so to name them, the Ideal and the Actual. No pair of names that we can hit upon expresses the antithesis perfectly, or without danger of gross misconstruction. The great containing Reality of the Unseen world is God, Creator, Lord, Conservator, Lawgiver and Judge. In Him live and move the angels, and the spirits of the departed, and men, and all that has life ; in Him move and act all suns and planets, and all that is. But His particular work, and special outpouring of Himself, is in the Incarnation, whereby Himself has become man. With the Incarnation goes the Crucifixion and the Resurrection,



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the Ascension and promise of future Judgment, the Church, the Papacy, the Mass, the Blessed Eucharist and the other Sacraments, Grace, Heaven, and—since *contraria sunt in eodem genere*—also Hell. The other is the world of Sense, and of Intellect also, so far as Intellect serves for ascertaining laws of nature, whether physical laws or moral laws, and determining the outcome of those laws in particular cases. This is the world of Physical Science, and of Politics and Political Economy, and of Business and the ordinary occupations of life. These two worlds are not perfectly distinct. God is the author of both the one and the other. Philosophy, Literature, and Fine Art are conversant with both. But they are distinct to this extent, that a man may live in the second, or lower world, and devote himself to the second, and ignore or even deny the first, and declare that he has no perception of it at all. And many men do so live. For them there is no God, but only the laws of nature. There is no heaven or hell in their recognition. Christ to them is a great teacher of Ethics, by word, by character, and by example, but nothing more. These men are called Rationalists, or Agnostics : their enemies, when they wish to be contumelious, call them Atheists, but there is no man who does not shrink from that appellation. The truest name to give them, and a name that has no offence in it, is that of *men without faith*. Over against them stand *men with faith*. The *men with faith* live, and have their mental vision, in both worlds ; the *men without faith* live in, and profess to see no further than, the second world only.

Now a man with faith cannot but expect the world that he believes in to overflow at times into the world that he sees. If some sudden and overpowering calamity is lowering over him, he will not look for his sole means of escape to his own energy and address, abetted by some favourable environment and fortunate combination of nature's laws. *I called upon the Lord in distress*, says the Psalmist, the man of faith (Ps. cxvii.). The man without faith pronounces such invocation superstition. "You don't invoke machinery," he says, "and there is no agent

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but acts mechanically." Entangled in machinery that cannot stop itself, we do not beg it not to crush or grind us. We may have pluck and energy of our own to seize upon the machine and stop its working ; but then the doubt occurs,—occurs, that is, to the man without faith,—whether the energy of our own volition does not act mechanically, whether its application is not simply determined by the food that we have eaten, and the present composition and conformation of our muscles and nerves. Away from belief in God, it is hard to believe in the spirituality of our own nature, and in that special manifestation of a spiritual nature which is called *free will*.

The man with faith quite appreciates machinery, and the potency and generality of its action. He confesses the reign of natural laws. But he sees himself able to alter the conditions under which these natural laws shall work. That he is doing all day long, every day of his life, by the exercise of his mental and bodily faculties under the guidance of his will. How he does it, is quite another question ; probably he has no theory of freewill to offer, but he is certain that he has such a power. Now what he claims for himself as an intelligent agent, he claims also for God. Man can produce collocations and trace channels for natural laws to act in : much more therefore God can. A skilful physician, knowing the laws of health and disease, and quite unable to change them, can yet so avail himself of their action as that health shall be restored. Any man believing in a God, powerful and wise, cannot deny Him that control over disease which a medical man possesses : God must have all that and more. God must be the first of physicians, the first of surgeons, the first of engineers. God's work, when it is direct,—that is, not done through natural causes,—and striking the senses, is called " miracle." To work a miracle, there is no more need for God to annul a law of nature, than there is either need or possibility for man to annul such a law, when he works a sensible effect. In either case the effect is the resultant of the forces applied. There is no law of nature, that no force higher than the forces of nature shall ever

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come in. Physical Science has never proved that all existent forces are physical forces,—that there are no angels able to act on matter, no possible action of the Creator Himself in the material world.

It is indeed often said by Catholic divines that a miracle is a reversal of the laws of nature. What they mean is that the *course* of nature is changed by the intervention of a new force not known to nature. It may be taken to be a law of nature, that a hungry lion will devour a man thrown to him. So stated, this natural law was broken, when the lions did not devour Daniel. But the law is inadequately stated. Mill says somewhere in his *Logic* that the laws of nature should be stated as tendencies only, and then only are they indefeasible. The lion tends to devour the man, and this tendency will work itself out in act, unless it be checked by some opposite tendency. That tendency may be a strong muzzle ; it may be the restraining power of an angel sent by God for that purpose. The law is not broken in the second case any more than in the first, when the law is scientifically stated, as a tendency only.

Whether then, when we pray to God for a miracle, we pray that the laws of nature may be reversed on our behalf, is a question that depends for its answer on the sense assigned to the phrase “laws of nature,”—whether the phrase be taken in its popular or in its philosophical sense. In the philosophical sense of the phrase, we do not ask that the laws of nature may be reversed, but that a hyper-physical force may intervene as one of the conditions of the collocation under which those laws are to work.

Commonly in our distresses we do not pray to God for a miracle at all, but for something short of a miracle, which we may call a “favour.” It is not too much to say that God grants a million favours to one miracle in answer to prayer. Christians who pray will assure you that they have never asked for a miracle, and almost certainly, that they have never obtained one, but that they have obtained favours innumerable. A favour differs from a miracle, in not being a direct and sensible display of divine power. In asking a favour of the Almighty we do not ask Him to

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show His hand so manifestly as we do in asking for a miracle. Thus we ask as a favour for success in an examination, for which we have worked hard. If ill-health had prevented our working, and we know ourselves to be unprepared, and still we asked that we might pass an examination, where the examiner knew his business,—that would be asking for a miracle. It would also, commonly speaking, be a foolish and irreverent petition. Holy men advise us not to ask for miracles, except in the rare cases in which we feel what we may well take to be an inspiration from God encouraging us so to do.

When we ask a favour of God, or even a miracle, the boon that we crave absorbs all our interest. We believe that divine omnipotence can grant it : but as to the method of its bestowal we are supremely indifferent, and are usually content to have no knowledge, not even any theory, on that subject at all. We pray to have a fine day for a procession or for a cricket-match. We firmly believe that God is not so impotent in His own creation as to be unable to accord us that favour. But how He is to secure that particular day being fine, whether by a collocation of causes arranged ages ago in foresight of our prayer, or by sending an angel to disperse the clouds, or otherwise,—of this the votary never thinks, any more than he troubles himself to explain his own faculty of free choice ; he simply rests on the certainty that he has that faculty, and that God has the power to grant his prayer.

Many of the favours that we ask of God are things that may come about naturally by some influence exerted on the mind of man, if only such influence can be brought to play. I may readily pass an examination in a subject of which I am not wholly ignorant, provided that God will quicken my mental powers to their best perfection, and guide the latent currents of my thought into opportune courses. In an illness that puzzles the doctors, my friends pray that God may move the mind of my medical attendant to hit upon exactly the right thing to do. If I recover, my medical man takes the credit to himself, not unnaturally ; and yet, if I had not been prayed for, his conjecture



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would not have been so felicitous, and for all his care and skill I should have died. There are perhaps no favours, granted in answer to prayer, so frequent as these. And no wonder : for they are on the lines of certain divine operations that are going on continually in the minds of men all the world over, operations not miraculous and yet supernatural,—I mean the operations of grace. By what is called “actual grace,” God Himself is continually guiding the intellect and the will of man, not teaching him new things beyond the compass of his naturally-acquired knowledge, but pressing points of that knowledge upon his notice and appreciation, and sustaining or checking his resolves. This is the daily converse of God with the human soul, without which no soul could ever make its way to heaven. Actual grace is an ordinary process of Christian life, an essential feature of the present order of Divine Providence. Being thus, we may say, committed to acting personally and immediately upon the minds of men in order to bring them to eternal life, God is not indisposed to work upon those same minds for purposes also of temporal well-being, in answer to prayer, particularly since those temporal favours are granted ultimately in view of the spiritual profit of the persons who pray for them, as were also the miraculous cures wrought by our Saviour.

I knew a Catholic doctor who used to say to people who were praying for the recovery of any of his patients : “Pray that I may be directed how to treat the case.” This was a proper recognition of a certain Law of Parimony, in regard to favours and miracles. Miracles are sometimes used by God to make evident to the Church the heroic sanctity of some of His servants, and afford ground for their canonisation. But, as I have said, divine interpositions, not miraculous, because not visible and manifest departures from the ordinary workings of nature, are usual answers to prayer, and there is no believer who does not believe himself to have experienced them frequently. In particular cases it is not easy to say where favours end, and miracles begin. In general the Law of

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Parcimony metes out favours liberally, especially in things of the mind, and restricts miracles. When miracles do occur, they occur in clusters, as in the lives of certain saints. Clusters of miracles marked the opening of the Mosaic dispensation, the opening also of the Christian dispensation ; and, judging from the Apocalypse, they will mark also the close of that dispensation upon earth, as even in the natural order the beginning and the end of human life is wonderful. *The nations shall be troubled, and they that dwell in the outermost parts shall be afraid of thy signs : thou wilt make glad the outgoings of the morning and of the evening* (Ps. lxiv. 8).

### CONFERENCE XXX : "MY WITNESSES" (Acts i. 8).

**W**E deferred till this Sunday the consideration of the following syllogism, which we marked as number three :

III. What is never attested by other than incompetent witnesses, does not happen. But a miracle is never attested by other than incompetent witnesses : therefore.

Further it is asked, and what I have to say will not be quite irrespective of the question : "What is the nature and value of testimony at given times ? Did the man of the third century understand, or report, or interpret facts in the same way as the man of the sixteenth or the nineteenth ?"

One miracle in our Lord's public ministry enjoys the unique distinction of being reported by all four evangelists, the feeding of five thousand men with five barley loaves and two small fishes (Matt. xiv. ; Mark vi. ; Luke ix. ; John vi.). We are not here arguing the authenticity of the gospels. I assume them to be authentic records. I assume the absence in them of all wilful lying. I assume the witnesses to interpret and report the facts as they understood them, being on the spot, seeing with their own eyes, and taking an active part in the transaction. I ask whether the date, A.D. 29, goes any way towards vitiating this testimony ; whether any truth could come out of Galilee at that early period,—not, observe, true philosophy, or true religion, or accurate criticism, but a true report how a meal was served, and whence the provisions were brought and set before the guests. I maintain that many a man has been hung in England, and justly hung, on the evidence of illiterate persons, in no way better educated, or better apt to observe the things that passed before their eyes, than were Peter and Matthew and John. No doubt, the evidence of these illiterate Englishmen was sifted before a

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court : but I will presently show that the Apostles' testimony had to undergo a similar sifting and cross-examination.

That there was a great crowd in a desert place, that towards evening they sat down, ate, and had their fill, cannot be denied, unless we are to abolish all details of ancient history. The interesting point is where the provisions came from. Here sundry critics step in with their wisdom. Peering out from their arm-chairs back through the centuries, they know whence the provisions came, better than the men who saw them, handled them, dealt them out, and helped to eat them. Obviously, every man had come out, bearing the usual *cophinus*, or provision hamper ; and when the discourse was over, the hampers were opened, parties were formed, and there was a pleasant bivouac. From every side contributions were made to the Master ; and He, from the abundance offered Him, sent His Apostles round to supply the wants of any who might have come insufficiently provided. The Apostles, poor men, thought at the time, or afterwards persuaded themselves, that before their Master took the matter in hand, the *cophini* were all empty : they did not see, or they forgot, how food was forthcoming on all sides, independent of their serving : they were under some hallucination when they asked, *five barley loaves and two fishes, what are they among so many ?* : the enthusiasm of the multitudes, who wished to make Him King, was not because they had seen any miracle, but because they had listened to eloquent preaching, and had sat down to a well-organised five o'clock refreshment. In fact, the witnesses to whose ocular observation the four written records are due, were not men at all, but simple “ owls ” : our critics have imagined, conceived, supposed, and finally know and confidently relate the details of that famous repast. Themselves never having had any miraculous meals, but only such as could be accounted for under regular heads of household expenses, they are ready to set aside any and every testimony of special divine interference. We seem to have retrograded from the third to the first syllogism of our last Conference.



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What I don't know, isn't knowledge ;  
And I'm the Master of this College.

The first of Christian miracles is the Resurrection of Christ our Redeemer. The special function of the Apostles was to be *witnesses of the resurrection* (Acts i. 8, 22 ; ii. 32 ; iii. 15 ; iv. 33). Here again I assume the authenticity of the record, and the absence of any set purpose to deceive. The competence of the witness, and that alone, is at present under consideration. Jesus then, according to the Apostles' account, did not simply flit across their path like a wraith : but His tomb was found empty, He spoke to them, ate and drank with them (Acts x. 41), allowed them to handle His wounds, was seen by them and by others many times over, once by as many as five hundred persons together (1 Cor. xv. 5-8). He forced Himself, so to speak, upon their observation, and drew them gradually to accept a conclusion for which they distrusted the evidence of their own senses, that He was risen, as He had said He would rise. Fraught with this conviction, the Apostles went out to bear witness to an incredulous world.

We must beware of the notion that the keenness and vigour of criticism varies according to the inverse square of the distance from the time at which we live. That notion would lead us to conclude that, because nine hundred years ago men loved the marvellous and accepted it with undiscerning credulity, therefore they must have been quite fools, ready to see miracles everywhere and believe them on the slenderest evidence, in A.D. 99 or 29. The curve of the critical faculty, if I may be allowed the expression, is a very wavy and irregular thing in the course of history. There are ups and downs, troughs and culminating points. There are perhaps epochs of criticism, there certainly are individual critics, meriting the description *ingenosior quam sagacior*. The age in which the Resurrection of Christ was first preached was the crest of a wave of rationalism. It was the age of the Jew and of the Greek, of Sadducee and Platonist. The Jews were a *stiff-necked people* (Acts vii. 51), an *unbelieving generation* (Matt. xvii. 17). Every student of Greek notices as telling upon

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himself the critical, rationalistic, matter-of-fact *ethos* of Hellenism, τὸ ἀκριβές, τὸ αὐθέκαστον. The Sadducees were founded on the belief that there is no resurrection, no spirit surviving death (Acts xxiii. 8). The Platonic philosopher hated the union of body and soul : perfection in his eyes consisted in the soul breaking away, never to be united with a body again (Plato, *Phaedo*, 114 C). No wonder that when the resurrection of the dead was preached on the steps of the Areopagus, *some mocked* (Acts xvii. 32). The rising again in the same body was a new and strange idea to the Greeks, subversive of their best philosophy, and, as the Roman governor Festus thought it, incompatible with common sense and sanity (Acts xxvi. 23, 24 ; cf. xxv. 19). We may be sure that the Apostles were examined and cross-questioned over and over again by incredulous enquirers about every detail of Christ's Resurrection and of His other miracles. The first century of our era was anything but a believing age. The Greeks of Corinth and Ephesus, whom St. Paul laboured to convince, were probably more intelligent and more capable judges of evidence than the bulk of the inhabitants of London and Birmingham at this day. He only succeeded with some of them (1 Cor. ix. 22, R.V. ; Acts xiii. 48), and, he confesses, with *not many wise according to the flesh* (1 Cor. i. 26). Yet some wise men came in (Acts xiii. 7, 12 ; xviii. 24), and the faith was planted and took root.

As in the natural order God has *left not himself without witnesses* (Acts xiv. 17 ; Rom. i. 20), so in every age Christ our Redeemer has on earth those whom He can still call *my witnesses*. The collective body of witnesses to Christ is the Christian Church. If you want to know Christ, there is no need of your turning antiquarian. Go to the Church of to-day : she represents Him and testifies to Him. You do not go to the Record Office to look for the British Government. Hence we must protest against such a view of Christianity as is embodied in the following sentence. “ Christianity is and always will remain a great literary and historical problem, a question of documents

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and testimony.” Protestantism may be such a problem, but not Christianity. The problem supposes a dead-handed, antiquarian system, not the living, teaching, ruling Church of Christ. It goes upon the confession that “as the Churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred, so also the Church of Rome hath erred,” and by implication also the Church of England hath erred, “in matters of faith”; also that “General Councils may err and have erred even in things pertaining unto God” (Articles XIX. and XXI.). But the Catholic and Roman Church makes no such confession of herself. Queen Victoria does not refer you to Ina of Wessex, but tells you: “What Ina once was in Wessex, that I am now, not in Wessex only, but throughout the Three Kingdoms, and in much of the world besides.” You do not deal with Ina, but with Victoria and her Government. You do not get your religious instruction out of biblical antiquities, but from the living Catholic Church of this day. She witnesses Christ to you. She guarantees the early Christian traditions, and, in another way, is herself guaranteed by them, even as the feet support the body, and are themselves supported by the body. Your standing is not “all a question of feet,” as you discover when you try to stand after long confinement to a bed of sickness. For a statue to stand is all a question of feet, duly placed under the centre of gravity: but a living man stands by a vital action all along his body. The Church of to-day is continuous with the Church of yesterday, and of the day before, and of last century, and of all previous centuries up to the first. She binds all ages in unity, and embodies them all. She is willing enough to enter into antiquarian researches, and studies of early documents and testimonies, but with this proviso, that the past must be interpreted in the light of the present: the fragmentary first records must be pieced together according to the plan of the Church now obtaining: the present must not be set aside in the reconstruction of the past. The Pope and the Bishops in union with the Pope are still Christ’s witnesses, and their testimony is as valid as that of the College of the Apostles: indeed

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it is the same testimony : the Apostolic witness has never ceased in the Church.<sup>1</sup>

Christ while He taught on earth sometimes appealed to antiquity, to Abraham (John viii. 56), to Moses (John v. 45, 46), to David (Matt. xxii. 42-45), but usually to Himself (John viii. 18), to the character of His teaching and the *works* which accompanied it (John v. 36 ; x. 37, 38 ; Matt. xi. 2-6). *He taught as one having power* to do wonderful works (Matt. vii. 29). The officers sent to seize Him came back, saying in admiration of His teaching, *Never man spake so* (John vii. 46). The peculiar note of His teaching was unearthliness. Coming as Messiah among a people who were eager for a great temporal deliverer to appear in that capacity, who longed for a Hebrew Alexander to fill Jerusalem with silver and gold, the tribute of conquered nations, He was ever proclaiming that He was not of this world, His disciples were not of this world, His Kingdom was not of this world (John xvii. 16 ; xviii. 36 ; viii. 23) : therefore His countrymen hated Him and had Him put to death. The same note is taken up by the Apostles, Peter, Paul, and John (1 Pet. ii. 11 ; iv. 7 ; 1 Cor. vii. 29-31 ; Gal. vi. 14 ; Heb. xi. ; 1 John ii. 15-17). It is heard in the voice of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and of the Canon Law. In the cases where in their private lives, and occasionally in their public policy, Popes and Prelates have been unmindful of this ruling characteristic of their Master, the Church has always suffered for it. The Church has won her way among men precisely inasmuch as her course has been guided by her Master's maxim : *Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice* (Matt. vi. 33) ; and inasmuch as she has disdained all temporal things except so far as in one way or another they are useful instruments of spiritual good and forward the salvation of souls. This is the

<sup>1</sup> “ I cannot allow that it (Christianity) is a mere historical religion. Certainly it has its foundations in past and glorious memories, but its power is in the present. It is no dreary matter of antiquarianism ; we do not contemplate it in conclusions drawn from dumb documents and dead events, but by faith exercised in ever-living objects, and by the appropriation and use of ever-recurring gifts. Our communion with it is in the unseen, not in the obsolete.” (*Grammar of Assent*, p. 488, ed. 1895.)



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“ detachment ” of the saints.<sup>1</sup> The saints and saintly men, recognised by the Church as such, best embody the spirit of the Church. It is a spirit that never changes : it is *the mind of Christ* (1 Cor. ii. 16). The world loves it not, but fears it and does it homage. The world is quick to discover when any churchman is wanting in it, and disparages him accordingly. The great note of the Church is this abiding spirit, unearthly, unworldly, supernatural, peculiarly Christian, which is breathed in the gospels, which peopled the catacombs, which animated the martyrs, which ever saves the papacy, which makes saints ; and by loss of which the worldly-minded Catholic and the wilful apostate suffers manifest reversion to the ancient type of paganism.

<sup>1</sup> ἔχου τῶν πνευματικῶν, ὑπερόρα των βιωτικῶν, “ lay hold of the spiritual look above the temporal,” is the motto attached to the ancient portraits of the greatest of Christian preachers, St. John Chrysostom.

## CONFERENCE XXXI : CATHOLICS AND CRIMINAL STATISTICS

**I**N this Sunday's gospel (Matt. xxii. 1-14) you have heard the parable of the Marriage Feast. There is a similar parable in Luke xiv. 16-24. A number of persons are invited to the banquet of the Kingdom of Heaven, that is, they are called upon to become members of the Church on earth. They refuse on various pretexts, and incur the King's anger accordingly. In their stead are gathered in a number of other guests, *poor, lame, halt and blind, good and bad*. The parable tells us plainly that the true Church of Christ shall contain unworthy members. As a specimen case, the parable narrates how one of these ill-conditioned guests is singled out for punishment, for *many are called, many are members of the Church, but few are chosen*, not all are worthy members. To return to the originally invited guests, who refused to come. Besides the *country house*, and the *yoke of oxen*, and the *wife*, a new excuse has been found : " You have invited such villainous company, that I cannot come ! " I fear this new excuse will not be taken either. " I can't be a Christian, I can't be a Catholic, because there are bad Christians, and bad Catholics ! " The King's anger will be stayed by no such defence.

Such, however, is the excuse, such the argument against Catholicism, which I find in the following leaflet of the Protestant Press Association, portions of which I print :

. . . Let us glance at a few figures. The *Catholic Times* of April 17th, 1885, confessed that during the year ending March 31st, 21,324 prisoners were committed to Liverpool Gaol. Of these 13,676 were Catholics, while Protestants numbered only 7,648. The daily average prison population for the year was 633.45 Catholics, against 327.52 of all other denominations. Another Romish paper, the *Universe*, admitted that, " The vice and immorality existing among the Catholic body in Liverpool are fearful." It refers to Rev. Father Nugent's figures, as above, and

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says that " the strongest phalanx in the devil's army (in Liverpool) is recruited from the ranks of Catholicism. Of the three great divisions in that gloomy host—thieving, harlotry, and intemperance—the majority are members of our Community. . . ." Monsignor Nugent (for twenty-two years Catholic Chaplain at the Gaol) declared in an address at the Liverpool League Hall, November 11th, 1886, that " Nine out of ten of the girls to be seen at night along London Road or Lime Street were Catholics ; *there was no use denying it*" (*Catholic Times*, November 12th).

*The Tablet* (Cardinal Vaughan's paper) has stated (issue of February 12th, 1898) that 25 per cent. of our criminals are members of the " true " Church ; and Mr. G. Ruggles-Brise, Chairman of the Prisons Commission, in a speech delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Catholic Prisoners' Aid Society (the late Lord Chief Justice in the chair) said " there were between 3,000 and 4,000 Roman Catholics in local (London) prisons, and nearly one-fourth of the convict population of this country was of that faith " (*Morning Leader*, March 21st, 1900).

In England, so in Scotland and elsewhere. Romanists met last June in Glasgow to form a Catholic Prisoners' Aid Society. A society already exists, but (I quote the *Monitor*, June 8th) " owing to the large number of unfortunates—about 9,000 per year passing through Barlinnie alone—belonging to our body," there was room for another.

These statistics either prove no more than that things have happened exactly as our Lord foretold in His parables, or they prove too much,—they cut too deep, they are available against all forms of Christianity, they afford an excuse for remaining an unbaptized heathen. They are factors of that terrible problem of evil of which no man possesses the solution. Why has not Christianity succeeded better in its conflict with human wickedness ? Why have not all men received the gospel ? and among those who have in some sort received it, Protestants as well as Catholics, why so much wickedness ? Have the gentlemen of the Protestant Press Association got their answer ready ?

The wickedness of the Jews, for which see Rom. ii. 17-24, did not prevent their being God's chosen people (Deut. xxvi. 18, 19). So wicked were they, that God complained : *through you my name is blasphemed among the Gentiles* (Isa. lii. 5, quoted Rom. ii. 24). The text has a sad

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application to thousands of poor Catholics in our large towns, who are a disgrace to their religion and a bar to conversions. Of these poor people and their frequent appearances in the police court, and the scandal thence taken against Catholicism, I am now to speak. No one can blame the Jewish religion, the foundation of God himself, for the evil lives that many Jews lived. Not because they were Jews were they wicked, but because they broke with Moses and ignored the law, or at least *let alone the weightier things of the law* (Matt. xxiii. 23). Neither is it Catholicism that makes criminals : the excessive proportion of Catholics in the criminal classes lies open to quite another explanation. Let us bring a little logic to bear. Social phenomena are exceedingly complex : cause and effect there are hard to unravel. Statistics are excellent things, logically applied. But, logic apart, "you can prove anything by statistics." I turn then to J. S. Mill's *Logic*,<sup>1</sup> to the chapter on "The Four Experimental Methods." The first Method, the "Method of Agreement," is thus stated : "If two or more instances of the phenomenon under investigation have only one circumstance in common, the circumstance in which alone all the instances agree, is the cause (or effect) of the given phenomenon." Hereupon the Protestant Press Association argues :—The phenomenon under investigation is crime : quite an unusual number of instances of crime have only one circumstance in common, that is, Romanism : therefore Romanism is the cause (or effect) of crime. As in most bad arguments, the weakness of this argument becomes apparent as soon as it is drawn out. There is a second circumstance in common, besides Romanism, in this "unusual number of instances" : that circumstance is squalid poverty. We are then carried on to a deductive enquiry whether squalid poverty or the Roman Catholic faith is more likely to engender crime. That we will discuss presently.

Let us give the Protestant Press Association the benefit of another experimental method, the "Method of

<sup>1</sup> Mill's *Logic*, I., 451.



## CATHOLICS AND CRIMINAL STATISTICS

Concomitant Variations." Its canon is stated thus: "Whatever phenomenon varies in any manner whenever another phenomenon varies in some particular manner, is either a cause or an effect of that phenomenon, or is connected with it through some fact of causation."<sup>1</sup>

The two phenomena are Romanism and crime, and it is argued that crime increases as Romanism increases, and that therefore there is some causal connexion between them. This must mean that the more the Catholic faith and practice takes hold of individuals and nations, *e.g.*, the more loyal they are to the Pope, the oftener and the more devoutly they go to Confession and to Holy Communion, the more fervently they pray to the Blessed Virgin, the more likely they are on that account to commit crimes of violence, or otherwise to violate public morality, and fall into the hands of the police. The assertion is ludicrous. Were it true, the cure of these poor Romanist criminals would be simple in the extreme. Protestantise them, and you will reform them. But they are protestantised already: there is the pity of it. They live in defiance of the Pope's commands about Sunday Mass. They never go near the Sacraments: Confession and Holy Communion to them are obsolete practices: many of them never pray: the Hail Mary has died away on their lips, and the Our Father also. From a Catholic land they or their parents have come into the midst of the Protestantism and the heathenism of our own large English towns: they have been de-Catholicised and demoralised *pari passu*. I wish the Protestant Press Association much joy of the Method of Concomitant Variations applied to this case.

Let us take up the question of squalid poverty in its bearing on crime. Why is it that the comfortable and the well-to-do classes do not figure in criminal statistics, except now and then in a matter of some big fraud or matrimonial scandal, some *facinus majoris abollae*, on which Aristotle observes very well that crimes of the first magnitude are not committed under stress of hunger.

<sup>1</sup> Mill's *Logic*, I., 464.

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Quite apart from Christianity, there exists a certain social virtue, πολιτικὴ ἀρετή, consisting in regard for others, their rights, their likings, their sensibilities ; in love of law and order, in appreciation of articles of value, your own and other people's, as things to be preserved in the hands that have them ; in being polite and well-dressed ; in saying on some occasions much less than you think, on other occasions a great deal more. This virtue the comfortable classes teach to their children : it is their class interest to teach it and learn it and maintain it. Too frequently, on the other hand, the children of the very poor are not taught social virtue. From infancy they are treated roughly and behave rudely. They see no beauty in the established order of things. They would not be so very much worse off, if anarchy and civil war were to ensue. The struggle for the necessities of life and for coarse enjoyments leaves no leisure nor aptitude for processes of refinement. They grow up "a rough lot" ; and where no priest instructs them, nor policeman intimidates them, they commit such crime as comes in their way. Girls, they go out upon the streets, for hunger, to begin with, then for evil passion and habit : but the well-fed sons of luxury are their paymasters. Some sin is born of *fulness of bread* (Ezech. xvi. 49), other sin of emptiness of stomach. The latter sort of sin the poor commit, and of the two it is the more likely to appear in the police court and earn lodgings in gaol.

But of the two it is not the more likely to be the more odious to God. St. Thomas (2a 2æ, q. 116, art. 2) tells us : " In human acts that is not always the more grievous sin which is the fouler and more unseemly. For the comeliness of man is by reason ; and therefore carnal sins, whereby the flesh carries the day over reason, are fouler and more unseemly, although spiritual sins are more grievous, because they proceed from greater contempt. . . . Shame has regard to the unsightliness of sin : hence a man is not always more ashamed of the more grievous sin, but of that which looks uglier." <sup>1</sup> The sin which looks worse is by no

<sup>1</sup> Translation in *Aquinas Ethicus*, II., 230.

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means always the worse sin. The sins of the poor and the uncultivated look worse : but the sins of their betters are more detestable to Heaven, because committed against greater light, because involving less of blind appetite, and more of true volition. There are sins of brutality and sins of diabolic malice. So long as quite an abnormal proportion of destitute poor are registered as Catholics, we must expect Catholics to figure unduly among the criminal classes. Still the question remains : Do more Catholics or more non-Catholics go to hell ? Into that region the Protestant Press Association has not been able to push its investigations. Yet the saving of souls from eternal damnation is the proper work of a Church, and the true test of its efficiency, since it was for that end precisely that Christ lived, and taught, and died. Christ never promised the Kingdom of Heaven to the respectables, but to the clean of heart and to the penitent thief.

## CONFERENCE XXXII : OUR LORD'S ATTITUDE TO THE PHARISEES

THE strong opposition of our Divine Saviour to the Pharisees is a leading feature in all four Gospels, and therefore must contain some deep meaning for our guidance. The Gospel remains perennially the most modern of books. It never becomes antiquated; it speaks to the needs of every succeeding generation. There must be Pharisaism in some form lurking somewhere in modern society. We will endeavour to discover and beware of it. There were no friendly relations between Christ and the Sadducees. That cannot surprise us. He was *not of this world* (John xvii. 16). The Sadducees were openly *of the earth, earthy* (1 Cor. xv. 47). But the strict, spiritual, ascetic Pharisees! one can imagine our Lord's *brethren* advising Him to join Himself to that party (cf. John vii. 3-5). Far from it. He showed Himself even more adverse to the Pharisees than to the Sadducees. He told those men of manifold observances that *publicans and harlots* (tax-gatherers and Gentiles and fallen women) should enter into the Kingdom of God before them (Matt. xxi. 31). The explanation was this. It was as though some University Extension lecturer had gone down into a country place, and found there everybody ignorant but docile, except one man, who had some tags of information, a little popular science, a few classical quotations, much loquacity, and vast self-confidence, and who, far from suspecting that he had himself anything to learn, was, on the contrary, anxious to teach the lecturer, and waxed indignant at the latter not following his methods. Would not our lecturer come away saying the one man in that ignorant neighbourhood whom he could not stand was that same sapient and self-sufficient personage? This was the sum of the Pharisees' offending, that they were of those who *trust in themselves that they are just, and*



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*despise the rest of men* (Luke xviii. 9). They bore hard upon the sinner, and could not understand our Lord's indulgence to the fallen (Luke vii. 39 ; xv. 1, 2 ; Matt. ix. 11). They are referred to by Christ, ironically, as persons *in health who need not a physician* (Matt. ix. 12), and as the *just who need not penance* (Luke xv. 7). They rejected Christ's call to penance as they had rejected St. John's (Matt. xxi. 25), and so their *sin remained* (John ix. 41). For they were really full of sin, they were sinners of the worst sort, sanctimonious sinners. Their goodness was all exterior, they *did their works to be seen of men*, they *enlarged their fringes* (Matt. xxiii. 5) : *they made clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but within they were full of uncleanness, like whited sepulchres* (Matt. xxiii. 25, 27). They substituted trifling observances for the great commandments of the law (Matt. xxiii. 23) : they perverted the commandments by false glosses (Matt. xv. 3-6) : they multiplied injunctions, they said and did not (Matt. xxiii. 3, 4). But their great and unpardonable sin was the deliberate rejection of the Messiah, and the putting of His miracles down to the power of Beelzebub (Matt. xii. 24, 31).

Is the Pharisee an extinct species, known to us only in the fossil state ? Not so, otherwise some of our Lord's strongest warnings would be no warnings to us. The Pharisee still lives, but, like other living beings, he has adapted himself to his environment. He no longer goes about with parchments tied on to his forehead, and blue fringes to his clothes (Matt. xxiii. 5). In some cases he has resigned all pretence to religion, finding religion out of fashion. If you ask him whether the mission of Christ was *from heaven or from men*, he and his compeers answer, as the Pharisees of old answered the question about John's baptism, *we know not* (Matt. xxi. 25-27). Hence their name "Agnostics." Many who bear the name, however, make as though they clearly did know, and practically deny. Of them, not of the hesitating, self-tormented Agnostic, may Pharisaism be predicated. There is one essential feature in the Pharisee of all time,—self-satisfaction.

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The Agnostic Pharisee has cultivated the habit of despising the Christian Church of the present day as an effete institution. He is satisfied that the future of the human race rests with him, and with the men who think with him. He holds the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ in sturdy abhorrence. He believes in culture, not religion, as the leading principle in education. He will not hear of any subordination of the present life to a life awaiting men, all and each of them individually, beyond the grave. He never thinks of himself as a possible subject of punishment. Punish me ! The idea to him is preposterous. He has no sense of sin, except to condemn it in other people. In all things he feels no doubt but that he is right and Christianity wrong,—the Papal Church in particular fatally and egregiously wrong. The leading feature of Pharisaism, ancient and modern, is self-sufficiency and pride. Now, pride is exactly the one sin that God will not bear. God is very tolerant of other human weaknesses and wickednesses. The behaviour of the Son of God in the Gospels tells us that. History and the experience of life tells us the same. God looks for the return of all other sinners from their evil ways, but the proud man He knows will never go back upon his path, unless the pride be knocked out of him by some crushing humiliation. The prominence of Pharisaism in the Gospel records is designed to teach us this one lesson,—greatly to beware of pride.

We are removed from Pharisaism exactly so far as the faith and grace of Christ have taken hold of our hearts. And I know that Christ has taken hold of your hearts. One sign of His grace working there is this, that you are none of you satisfied with the measure of spiritual growth to which you have yet attained. You all feel deep down in your inmost selves that you fall far short of the holiness and justice which should be yours as baptized Christians. I doubt if such a sentiment of an unattained ideal of personal goodness is common away from Christianity and the grace of God. Certainly it is the very reverse of Pharisaism. The Pharisaism is a man devoid of all ideal for his personal conduct. I say “devoid of ideal,” because in

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this world an ideal is a standard of goodness, aimed at but not attained. *Not that I have already attained, or am already perfect, but I follow after if anywise I may attain*, says St. Paul (Phil. iii. 12). The man with such an ideal cherishes a kind of divine discontent at self. He is sorrowful for self in the past, mistrustful of self for the future : he is desirous of receiving help. The Pharisee has completed the process of his own Beatification : he is confirmed in goodness, he is even with God. If he has not dismissed the Almighty altogether from his thoughts, he has made a Concordat with Him, he has arranged a *modus vivendi*. God is to have so much, chiefly of exterior observances, so that man may take all the rest. These observances are paid, God Almighty is as it were "pensioned off," and the Pharisee remains with the notion that he is a *just* man (Luke xviii. 9), saying, *I am rich, and my fortune is made, and I have need of nothing, and not knowing that he is wretched and pitiful and beggarly and blind and naked* (Apoc. iii. 17).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is a curious instance how men misunderstand one another, that non-Catholics so often regard Catholics as Pharisaically self-conscious of their 'better gifts,' and despisers of their fellow men, if not actually revelling in the prospect of their eternal damnation. Men who differ from us do not object to our doctrines so much as to the 'pride' with which we hold them,—a false notion, I hope, which would vanish on better acquaintance. The mistake arises partly from the accidents that befall any earnest writing, when it comes under the eyes of strangers, partly from a shyness on our part, which wears an air of pride.

## CONFERENCE XXXIII : THE REIGN OF CHRIST

**J**ESUS OF NAZARETH was born with royalty written across His brow. His birth was announced to His Mother with the words : *The Lord God shall give him the throne of David his father, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end* (Luke i. 32, 33). Wise men from the East sought His cradle, inquiring, *Where is he that is born king of the Jews?* (Matt. ii. 2), thereby giving origin to the feast of the Epiphany, the feast of the manifestation of Christ the King (cf. 4 Kings xi. 12). He entered Jerusalem in the last days of His life with the multitudes crying round Him, *Hosanna to the King of Israel* (John xii. 13) ; and when that cry was found fault with, He justified it : *I say unto you, if these shall be silent, the stones will cry out* (Luke xix. 40). He made on His trial what St. Paul calls *the good confession before Pontius Pilate* (τὴν καλὴν ὁμολογίαν, 1 Tim. vi. 13) : *Art thou a king then? Thou sayest (i.e., art right in saying) that I am a king* (John xix. 37). He was asked a favour as King on the cross, and promised it : *This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise* (Luke xxiii. 43), that is, in my royal domain.<sup>1</sup> He died with His title *King of the Jews* (Mark xv. 26) written over His head, and was buried with royal honours (John xix. 39-41 ; cf. 2 Paral. xvi. 14). The very name of *Christ*, or *Messiah*, signifies "anointed" (King, χριστὸν βασιλέα, Luke xxiii. 2) ; and this name He undoubtedly claimed (Matt. xvi. 16, 17). His daily speech in His public life was of *the kingdom of heaven*,<sup>2</sup> or *the kingdom of God*.<sup>3</sup> This kingdom was to be triumphant and perfect only in the world to come : still it was to be on earth. That is proved by the frequent

<sup>1</sup> παράδεισος is the park attached to a royal residence.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. iii. 2. The expression is peculiar to St. Matthew's Gospel, where it recurs continually.

<sup>3</sup> John iii. 3, 5 ; Matt. xii. 28 ; xxi. 31, 43 ; and often in SS. Mark and Luke.



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mention of unworthy members of the kingdom, *the wise and foolish virgins* (Matt. xxv. 2) ; *the wedding filled with guests both good and bad* (ib. xxii. 10) ; *the net gathering together of all kind of fishes, good and bad* (ib. xiii. 47, 48) ; and of men who reject the kingdom with contumely, *we will not have this man to reign over us* (Luke xix. 14), a text which, with its pendant, *v. 27*, shows evidently that Christ meant to reign on earth.<sup>1</sup> In this world, however, His reign was to be a continual struggle, His own struggle till death, and the struggle of His followers likewise till death. His kingdom was to be a kingdom of the *rescued* (*σωζόμενοι*),—men rescued by a struggle, for Christ was not content to reign on the mere title of His divine nature : *for thou wert slain and hast purchased us to God in thy blood* (Apoc. v. 9),—men in danger, so long as they are on earth, and needing to struggle for themselves, aided by the grace of their Redeemer, to make their deliverance complete (1 Cor. x. 12 ; 2 Cor. xii. 9 ; Col. i. 24). On these conditions God has *delivered us from the power of darkness, and made us over to the kingdom of the Son of his love* (Col. i. 13).

In one important particular Jesus disappointed the national expectation of the Jews with regard to Messiah's kingdom. He never would stir a finger to deliver His countrymen from the Roman yoke. He stood aloof from and infinitely above all politics. He was deferential to the Roman governor, and acknowledged his power as being of God (John xix. 11), according to the truth that St. Paul was to preach afterwards (Romans xiii. 1-5). He disclaimed before the same governor any idea of establishing a kingdom in the temporal order (John xviii. 36). On this ground He had *fled into the mountain himself alone when he perceived that they would come to take him by force and make him king* (John vi. 15). He would lead no

<sup>1</sup> This against the arch-Erastian Hobbes, who gave the State the sword in one hand and the crosier in the other, and evaded ecclesiastical authority by alleging that Christ was not to reign on earth till after the day of judgment (*Leviathan*, ch. xli.). St. Paul on the other hand and David foretold : *He must reign, in the midst of his enemies, until he hath put all his enemies under his feet* (1 Cor. xv. 25 ; Ps. cix.).

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Galilaean insurgents against the legions of Rome. To the great irritation of His countrymen, Jesus would make Messiah's kingdom no secular principality: claiming to be the Christ, He yet was no enemy to Cæsar and the existing Roman rule. By a strange perversion, the Jews rejected his claim to royalty, crying that they had no king but Cæsar (John xix. 15), whereas their real graveness was this, that they looked for Messiah to supplant Cæsar, cast out Pilate, Cæsar's representative, and reign in Jerusalem as temporal monarch, all which things Jesus definitely refused to do, and still He said that He was the Christ.

The apostles preached *this gospel of the kingdom* (Matt. xxiv. 14). After the day of Pentecost they at last (cf. Acts i. 6) understood that *the kingdom* meant no temporal monarchy. The destruction of Jerusalem brought this truth home to the Jewish Christians. The persecutions of the first three centuries brought the same truth home to the Christians of the catacombs. As the vision of a temporal monarchy receded, men substituted for it the hope of the near coming of Christ in His glory, the general resurrection, and the judgment of the world. A few short years, they reckoned, and *the kingdoms of this world would become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ* (Apoc. xi. 15). The more I have studied the New Testament, the more struck I have been with the intensity of this expectation in the primitive Church. Few of us realise what a place it had in the minds of the early martyrs, and how much of their heroism was founded upon it. Apostles shared in the expectation of a proximate reappearance of Christ, notably St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 51; <sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. v. 1-4; Phil. iii. 20; 1 Thess. iv. 15-17). Not that they taught it as a doctrine: they put it forward as a yearning and hope of their own, a matter which they knew was removed from their cognisance (2 Thess. ii. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 8-11), a matter which not only was not within the scope of the revelation of Christ, but was positively excluded from that scope as a

<sup>1</sup> In the Greek reading, the *all, all*, of this passage means "all we who are found alive at the day of judgment."

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thing unknown even to the Son, inasmuch as He was debarred by the Divine will from revealing the day and hour of His second coming (Mark xiii. 32). I mention this to argue how little the first Christians thought of any permanent establishment of the Church, Christ's Kingdom, as a militant force in this world.

Time went on, and still Christ came not, but His Kingdom on earth came more and more. With increase of numbers came clearer differentiation and better organisation. Authority grew distinct and definite: the authority of the presbyterate in each local church: the authority of one over the presbyterate: finally, the authority of the Roman bishop over other bishops,—even as a baby face gradually assumes expression, and the features become characteristic, and the soul, latent from the first, is slowly revealed. At the end of three centuries, persecution ceased,—I mean Pagan persecution: I omit the brief reign of Julian, and say nothing of the heretical persecutions of Constantius and Valens,—the line of Christian emperors opened with Constantine, and Christianity became the dominant religion of the Roman empire. The expectation of the early coming of *the Lord from heaven* (I Cor. xv. 47) faded and died out: men saw and were delighted with the splendid vision of the Kingdom of God now being realised on earth. Bishops were received at Court like senators, and in their several dioceses they were invested with functions of civil administration. Church and State were blended together, not entirely to the advantage of the former. This condition of seated peace and establishment was rudely disturbed by the irruption of the barbarians, and the fall of the Roman Empire in the west. Accordingly we find St. Leo, in A.D. 440, and St. Gregory, A.D. 600, recurring to the idea of the close approach of the day of judgment. Christ must reign, they argued: but the confusion and calamities of the time seemed to forbid the reign of the Prince of Peace in this world: therefore the end of the world and the peace of the heavenly kingdom must be close at hand. It is the argument of all troublous times. There was enough

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trouble in the world in the years A.D. 600-1000. This, and a misinterpretation of Apoc. xx. 1-7, led men to fix on the year 1000 as the last year of this world, and the opening of Christ's universal and perfect kingdom. The year 1000 passed, and left this world still in existence. Human society revived under the guidance of the Church, which had preserved in its custody much of the civilisation of the Roman empire. There ensued the centuries of the Church's greatest secular preponderance,—a more express image of the public reign of Christ than had appeared before or has been seen since. At the same time there were many drawbacks to this perfection. Enemies were around the kingdom, and extended their ravages within its confines. Matters grew worse, till the kingdom was rent by the great schism of the sixteenth century ; and the remnant of it was convulsed again by the earthquake of the French Revolution. The process of disruption has continued. The twentieth century sees the Church, as it was in the third century, a voluntary association among other associations, without legal privileges, jealously watched by the State, and at times persecuted by the same. Still, from century to century, whether the State allow it or not, the Church remains the spiritual Kingdom of the Son of God on earth, commanding man's intellect in His name by the rule of faith ; and bidding man's knee to bow in worship of his Creator and Redeemer according to a prescribed ritual of sacrifice and sacrament and religious observance ; trying and judging sin and sinners by Christ's law, and imparting in His name penance and absolution.

Christ's Kingdom, the Church on earth, can stand, and does stand, apart from any recognition by the State. Where only a fragment of the State is Christian and Catholic, Church and State must be separated : “ a free Church in a free State ” is the only possible *modus vivendi* there. Where all the people is Christian and Catholic, the case is very different. Such a people exists under two corporate formalities, one spiritual and one temporal,—to borrow Aristotle's illustration, as the same body of



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choristers may be drawn up now as a tragic chorus, now as a chorus for comedy, there being a different song and step and order in either case, but the same voices and the same persons. When such a people assembles in view of eternal salvation, it is a Church, a local and national Church, part of the Church Universal. When the same people is convened in view of the interests of this world, it is a State. Such a Church and such a State cannot go their several ways, the one irrespective of the other. There must be an understanding between them. Such a nation must form a national Church, a Church by law established. Such is the ideal of Christianity, the ideal contemplated in Papal utterances, never lost sight of by the Holy See, albeit never at any time perfectly realised, and, as things go in our day, not a practical possibility. One and the same moral person being at once nation and national Church, these two united capacities will be in the closest relationship with one another. So in the days of prince-bishoprics, the prince-bishop wrote letters to himself, of the style "Richard sends greeting to Richard," *Ricardus ep̄us Dunolmen. Ricardo ep̄o Dunolmen. Saludem.*<sup>1</sup> They really were letters of the civil officials of the bishopric writing to the ecclesiastical officials, or *vice versa*. A travesty of this normal union of Church and State was the Church of England under royal supremacy, as designed by Henry VIII. Such a union can exist only where faith is very strong and universally prevalent. On the other hand, the lack of such a union is always a certain disadvantage to the faith. But we must use the world as we find it, and not expect to make our way to heaven under ideal conditions.

Even as matters stand, Christ still reigns on earth, because the Catholic Church is on earth, and that Church is His Kingdom. No thought is more fertile of spiritual good, no thought more opportune in our day, than this thought of the reign of Christ. Leo XIII. commanded it to be specially preached to the people in the year of Jubilee, 1900. It is the main thought in the *Spiritual*

<sup>1</sup> Many letters in this form are extant in the Register of Bishop Richard Kellawe of Durham, published in the Rolls Series.

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*Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola,—a thought to sweeten life and ennoble existence. We have ever to remember that Christ reigns on earth imperfectly, that He may reign perfectly in heaven. There are no perfect men on earth, neither priests nor laymen. There is no perfect government on earth, neither civil nor ecclesiastical government. Whatever is mortal and human is so far forth defective, even though it be borne out by grace and the Spirit of God. Of mortal members of the kingdom, two only have been perfect, the King and the Mother of the King. We must bear our imperfections with patience, our own and our neighbours': they are only for a time: there is perfection before us in the kingdom to come. This thought, I say, sweetens life. And as years roll on, life needs some sweetening.

The inner vision of Christ the King ennobles life. It replaces the idea of "employment" by that of "service": it crowns the rock of duty with the castle of chivalrous generosity: it changes brass into gold by pervading all conduct with the sentiment of personal loyalty. A pauper breaking stones on the road has got employment; but he takes no pride in it, he has no interest in it. I suppose he breaks as few stones as he can for the pay. Her Majesty's Service, the Army and Navy, the Civil Service, the Railway Service, we hope, are conducted on a different principle. No true artist, no true workman, works merely for pay. He loves to see the thing done well, even for its own sake. If he is a member of a craft, one of a body of fellow-workers, with a great leader at their head, he insists on doing the work well for the sake of fellowship and the leader. As might be expected, the rude game of war, bringing out as it does the whole compass of human nature, affords our best examples of leadership.<sup>1</sup> The war-leader and the band of his companions (*comites*, *thanes*, counts) have had much to say to the foundation of modern European States.<sup>2</sup> They were the original king

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.*, the character of John Nicholson before Delhi in Lord Roberts' *Forty-one Years in India*, vol. i., ch. xviii., a character since so well impersonated by the great field-marshal himself.

<sup>2</sup> See Dr. Stubbs, *Constitutional History of England*, i., 24, 25.

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and nobility. Jesus Christ, the Founder of the Church, was a War-Leader of a higher order ; and the good and holy of all ages, in proportion to their holiness, have been His thanes and companions. A splendid idea this of the king and war-leader, lending itself well to oratory, and poetry, and painting. Yes, but it lends itself also most intimately to practice. If we take it up, it will save us from the baseness of the " Little Christian " ; the Christian who is anxious, if I may use the expression, to " dodge the devil," and finally, to escape hell, but under that proviso, to do as little for Christ and the Church of Christ as he possibly can. So he will avoid mortal sin, or too much mortal sin ; he will sin, if he may, *by number, weight, and measure* (Wisdom xi. 20), not going too far : but he will be yet more careful not to go too far in helping on the Kingdom of Christ upon earth, which is the Catholic Church. " No mortal sin " is the highest flight of his piety. An excellent and most necessary maxim ! Evil only enters in when this maxim is coupled with another : " No concern to make any effort for God, so that it be not obligatory under mortal sin." <sup>1</sup> You know what is meant by " good form " in society, and I doubt not you are solicitous to observe it. It is rightly exacted at the University. And yet it is not obligatory under mortal sin. There are endless vulgarities that are not very sinful. Now there is such a thing as " good form " from a Catholic point of view. I am loth to furnish instances of deflection from such a standard of perfection. They are too common for quotation. I would avoid personalities, and I would not out of my own mouth breathe my own condemnation. All I will say is, that " good form " in all things Catholic is the outward index of an inward spirit of loyalty and devotedness to the person of Jesus Christ our King.

<sup>1</sup> One is reminded of the gloss, *and hate thy enemy*, which the Jews added to the Levitical precept, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour* (Lev. xix. 18 ; Matt. v. 43).

## CONFERENCE XXXIV : THE INCARNATION AND THE GREEK VIEW OF LIFE

GREEK thought is woven into our civilisation. Thrice it has taken mankind captive : in Asia, after Alexander ; at Rome, after the fall of Corinth ; and in Western Europe, after the fall of Constantinople. Continually it reappears and reasserts itself in our midst, even in such un-Hellenic communities as Birmingham and Bradford. Observe, I speak of Greek thought, not of Greek grammar or the Greek language. A man may think and act like a Greek and not know alpha from omega, though, of course, the language and literature of the Greeks are the readiest channels of access to Greek thought. There are two sides to Greek thought and practice, a bright and a very dark side. "The glorious Greeks of old," as Byron calls them, have played this part in the order of Providence : they have shown how the keenest edge of intellect, the most delicate appreciation and passionate love of beauty, the finest taste in literature and art, joined to high physical development and training of the body, are means and appliances all too weak to guard man against gross errors in religion and moral science, savage civil strife, lying, treachery, and worse than bestial lust. Hence St. Paul's argument in the first two chapters of the Epistle to the Romans : "If the Greeks and the Jews, those two most highly gifted of nations, stood in such sore need of the remedial grace of Christ the Saviour, then all men in all countries and ages need the same." Thus much of what I have heard called "the alloy in the Attic talent," meaning the admixture of base elements in the Greek character. I admit them, but I had rather speak of the good gold which was found there, and which was taken up and, so to speak, re-coined and re-issued by Christianity. There is a verse in the *Prometheus Vincetus*,



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τοιαῦτ' ἐφύρω τοῦ φιλανθρώπου τρόπου  
Such the reward of thy man-loving ways.

The Parthenon, the Olympic Games, the Demus of the Athenians, the *Iliad*, the men of Marathon and Salamis, the philosophy of Plato,—these, O Son of Hellen, were part of the reward of thy man-loving, or rather I should say, thy man-admiring, ways. Man,—not ἄνθρωπος but ἀνὴρ, man in the male sex,—tall of stature, muscular and well-proportioned, able to race, to wrestle and to fight, to chant and accompany on the lyre a speech from the *Iliad*, or a martial strain of Tyrtæus, or the last monody of Euripides ; a fluent orator, not unversed in philosophy ; above all, man the citizen, ready to do and suffer all things for the city of his birth, and for the particular civic faction to which he adhered,—this was the conception of manly excellence which the Greek admired, this the model to which in great measure he succeeded in conforming himself. Quite another model of humanity was set before the Corinthian or Ephesian that heard St. Paul. The Apostle told him that philosophy and rhetoric, and political dexterity and high office in the State, and the extermination of opponents, and poetry and music, and skill in gymnastic exercises, and the radiant beauty of the youthful sun-god, were not the scope and aim and final end of human endeavour. He called on him to look the figure of Apollo Belvedere full in the face and say, “I would not be as thou,” and then turn away and put on Christ crucified. The *carnal man*, or the *old man* (1 Cor. ii. 14 ; Rom. vi. 6, vii. 14) whom the Christianised Greek was to lay aside in his baptism, was no two-legged swine of the Sardanapalus type : the *carnal man* was the prophet and the musician, he of the beaming face and flaxen hair, the glorious Apollo himself, the type of the living pagan Greek.

Yet in renouncing himself he was to find his better self. He was to put off Apollo, but he was to put on the Eternal Word Incarnate (Gal. iii. 27). Better the likeness of Christ than the likeness of Apollo ; a nobler likeness, carrying better gifts. There was a sadness in the worship of the sun-god. We read the sad strain in the second chapter of

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the Wisdom of Solomon, a Greek book :—*Short and grievous is our life, and there is no healing of a man at the last, and none hath been known to have come back from the grave. We were born to no purpose, and hereafter we shall be as though we had not been : for the breath of our nostrils is smoke, and reason a spark kindled in the motion of our heart. When that is quenched, our body shall pass into ashes, and our spirit shall be scattered as thin air ; and our name shall be forgotten in time, and none will remember our works ; and our life shall pass away as the traces of a cloud, and as a mist shall it be scattered, chased by the beams of the sun : for our life is the passing of a shadow, and there is no turning back from our end, since it is a consummation sealed, and none turneth back. Come, then, let us enjoy the good things that are, and let us use the creature as in youth, eagerly* (Wisdom ii. 1-6).

I should be the last person to allow that this reasoning is correct. Quite apart from Christianity and the peculiarly Christian doctrines of the Incarnation and the resurrection of the body, the position is philosophically untenable and absurd. That is abundantly proved by the argument in the *Republic* of Plato. But scientific argument is often rhetorically inefficient. The proof is sufficient to satisfy the trained intellect, but it does not come home to the multitude, and the people are nowise persuaded by it. Plato and the whole school of philosophers stood in sad need of reinforcement. And this is how Christianity reinforced natural morality, and carried man to heights even above his natural capacity. It provided not merely a code, but a model. It exhibited one perfect type of humanity in the person of Jesus Christ, God and man. Jesus Christ was no abstract αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, the Ideal Beauty of the *Symposium* of Plato : He was a living Man, perfectly good and beautiful, and now immortal. The love of the passionate Greek nature for manly beauty had streamed away and been lost on unworthy objects. Pure and bright in its origin, it became in its application sensual and vile and filthy, like the rivers in our factory districts, springing in clear streams from the rifts in the hillsides,

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and growing turbid and polluted with gathered filth as they flow past the haunts of men. The evil change was so manifest that the Greek philosophers, like men disappointed in love, placed the happiness of the soul after death in being eternally rid of the body,<sup>1</sup> that very human body whose beauty was of all objects most attractive to the Greek. That beauty they discovered was a snare and a temptation : at the best it was a disappointment, fleeting and passing soon away. They thought of some type of beauty in the region of eternities, accessible to the disembodied spirit, and to that alone. To that contemplation they invited mankind, and taught them to view the temporal union of the soul with the body as a necessary evil. No doctrine surprised the Greeks more than the resurrection of the body. No doctrine interested them more. *Hearing of resurrection of the dead, some scoffed ; but some said, we will hear thee again on this matter ; . . . and some (finally) believed* (Acts xvii. 32, 34). Observe, the resurrection of the body did not mean the resurrection of *the flesh, with its vices and concupiscences* (Gal. v. 24), the resurrection which Platonist philosophers deprecated : it was the resurrection of *a spiritual body* (1 Cor. xv. 24), real flesh, yet under such transformation (cf. Phil. iii. 21) as should make of risen men *the equals of angels* (ισάγγελοι, Luke xx. 36). I can imagine an Athenian replying to St. Paul : " This resurrection from the dead is an Egyptian notion, against all our philosophy : where is your proof ? " St. Paul had the best of answers ready : " I myself have seen the risen Jesus " (1 Cor. xv. 8). The Apostles did not philosophise : indeed there is no philosophical proof *a priori* of the resurrection : but *with great power* (of miracles) *they gave their testimony of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus* (Acts iv. 33) : for that was the apostolic office, to be *a witness of the resurrection* (Acts i. 22 ; cf. xvii. 18). They came forward, according to the words of St. Peter, as

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Phædo*, pp. 80-83. I am speaking of Platonic philosophers rather than of the Greeks generally. The average Hellene would have jumped at the idea of a resurrection of the body, could he have believed such a thing possible. The prospect of becoming 'a shadow' in the Underworld was far from cheerful to such a lover of corporeal beauty.

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*witnesses foreordained of God, we who have eaten and drunk with him since his rising from the dead* (Acts x. 41).

Jesus Christ, crucified and risen again, is the perfect Man : our love of Him, our likeness to Him, His reign in us, is Christianity. That is the *newness of life* (Rom. vi. 4) given us in baptism. A baptized man must endeavour in body and soul to be a mortal copy of his risen Saviour. For that he will have to put restraint upon himself, and watch over himself more than if he were a vessel of gold set with jewels. He must never fling himself away. The speech that I have quoted from the Book of Wisdom is a report of pagan words typically un-Christian. After all, the notion of self-restraint was by no means strange to the Greek mind. There was a word for it which they were continually using, the noblest word in their language, σωφροσύνη. Not indeed the Græco-Roman, the minister to Nero's debaucheries, nor again the Hellenised Asiatic, but the true Greek, was a frugal man, endowed with an artist's abhorrence of all excess. It has been said that the Greek was "no ascetic." The authors of this saying seem to forget that the very term "ascetic" is Greek, derived from the ἄσκησις, or training, to which the Greek athletes subjected themselves in view of the games. The Greek was a merry mortal, yet ready enough to take up ascetic practices where any good was to be gained by them. He quite recognised that the good of virtue itself can only be secured by that amount of asceticism which means self-mastery, and that it was worth the price. He was willing to practise further asceticism, even to severities, for further objects, for military superiority, as the Spartans did, and the Spartans were the admired of all Greece ; or for success in the games. Hence, St. Paul, speaking to the Corinthians of the asceticism necessary for a Christian man to attain to the glory of the resurrection, found his imagery ready to hand in ordinary Greek practice : *Every one that striveth for mastery (in the race) refraineth himself from all things* (or, better), *practiseth self-restraint in all things* (1 Cor. ix. 25).

I might go on to show how the Greek mysteries



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prepared men's minds for the Christian sacraments, the Greek hero-worship for the Christian cultus of saints, the Greek philosophy for Christian theology. In all ages it has been the rule of the Church to fix upon whatever was potentially good in humanity, to exalt it, to transmute it, and incorporate it in her own system. Only what is radically base and foul must she leave untouched. And the action of the Church as a whole is the rule and guide of the individual Christian. *Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are venerable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are holy, whatsoever things are lovable, whatsoever things are of good fame, any matter of excellence and any theme of praise* (Phil. iv. 8), in bodily exercise, in professional pursuits, in literary, scientific, and artistic culture, these things embrace as you have opportunity, turn them to good in this world, and finally to your eternal salvation.

The unhappy position of women has often been noticed as a blot upon Greek life. The wife had not her due place in her husband's affections and confidence. There is no Greek for the Roman *matrona*. The Athenian wife had even less of her due than the wife in Homeric society. In Greek mythology the lot of women was more honourable than in historic times. I mention the names of two virgin goddesses, Athena and Artemis, or, as the Romans identified them, Minerva and Diana. I mention them because, false deities though they were, the worship paid them and the legends attached to their names went some way to supply a craving of the Greek heart which Christianity was afterwards adequately to fill, the craving for some figure of ideally perfect womanhood. We read in Acts xix. 28-34 how the people of Ephesus sat two hours in the theatre crying *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*. Four centuries afterwards a Council of the Christian Church was held in Ephesus, and when the Council broke up in the evening, the people escorted the bishops with lighted torches through the streets, with shouts of *Μαρία θεοτόκος*. Artemis was dethroned, and Mary, Mother of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, was enthroned in Christian hearts in her stead.

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*Umbram fugat veritas,  
Noctem lux eliminat.*

Conyers Middleton and others thought to score a point against Catholicism by drawing attention to facts like this. The riper science of our day recognises that perfect forms are evolved from imperfect ones, that "there is some soul of goodness in things evil," that the materials of error, rearranged, build up the walls of the palace of truth. Seeking a perfect manhood, the Greek mind found *Jesus and the resurrection* (Acts xvii. 18), and discarded Apollo. Setting aside their Artemis and their Athena, the Greeks acquiesced in the vision of a woman, *all fair and with no spot* in her (Canticles iv. 7), Mary, the Virgin Mother of God made Man.

## CONFERENCE XXXV : THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION A DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE

THE theologians who advised Pius IX in the definition of the Immaculate Conception, 8 December, 1854, had two things to consider, the truth to be defined, and the definableness of the truth : for, as we shall see, not all religious truth is definable. If ever you are asked what the Immaculate Conception means, let me suggest this method of reply. Ask your inquirer if he had been baptized. When he says that he has, tell him that what was done for him at baptism was done for the Virgin Mary in the first instant of her human existence. The instant of his baptism, or christening, was the first instant of his Christian life : Mary's Christian life began when her human existence began : she was, so to speak, created and christened together. Up to the time of his baptism your inquirer was in original sin : Mary never was in original sin, because no instant of her human life preceded the instant of her sanctification. He was sanctified in baptism : that is to say, he was made holy, and dedicated in a special manner to God : he was put into the state of grace : he was made a child of God, a member of Christ, a temple of the Holy Ghost, and heir to the vision of God in heaven. Mary was all this from the first. When he was baptized, *Christ loved him and washed him from his sins in his blood* (Apoc. i. 5) : Christ so pre-eminently loved Mary that, whereas being a descendant of Adam she should have begun her existence in original sin and void of grace, He anticipated the work of baptism in her soul, and created it pure and full of grace, yet not pure otherwise than as we are made pure *in His blood*, that is, by the merits of His passion. Christ is the Redeemer *of all men, but particularly of the faithful* (1 Tim. iv. 10), and among the faithful of none so singularly as Mary. She owes more to His Saving Blood than any other mortal. She owes to it

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everything she has ; and the more she has, the more she owes. Such is the truth, now defined, of the Immaculate Conception.

To a Catholic, the best proof of a truth being definable is the fact of the Church having defined it. To be definable, a truth must be part of the original revelation given by Christ to His Apostles for them to transmit to mankind in His name. It need not, however, be a part clearly and distinctly discernible, whether in the New Testament or in the record of primitive tradition preserved in the writings of the Fathers. Enough that it be latent there, provided it be there indeed. Guided by the Holy Ghost, the Church gradually brings to light the latent contents of revelation, renders explicit what was before implicit, develops that which existed in germ. A little consideration will show that no other way of revelation was possible without astounding miracles. Our Divine Saviour told His Apostles a few hours before His death : *I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now ; but when he, the Spirit of truth, shall come, he will teach you all truth . . . and bring all things to your mind whatsoever I shall have said to you* (John xvi. 12, 13 ; xiv. 26). On the day of Pentecost the Apostles received a luminous comprehension of the whole revelation of their Master, a comprehension in many respects superior to that of the wisest theologian of our day, yet in some directions probably not so scientifically complete. But then, in teaching their disciples, the Apostles found themselves confronted with the difficulty which had been their Divine Master's difficulty in teaching them (Matt. xv. 16 ; Mark viii. 21 ; Luke xxiv. 25). Most of their converts were poor and illiterate persons (1 Cor. i. 26) ; and the few who were wise were wise the wrong way about, being full of opinions contrary to the Gospel. The Apostles bestowed on them, indeed, the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts viii. 17 ; x. 44-47), yet not to such fulness of understanding as they themselves had received at Pentecost. This, then, was the difficulty. Christianity as a system, as a well-trained Catholic understands it now, was much too



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novel and far too vast for the converts made by the Apostles naturally to comprehend it. There remained the possibility of supernatural enlightenment wherever the Gospel was preached, reaching not to mere rudiments and essentials, but to the full development of the Gospel. Such enlightenment would have been a miracle on a vast and astounding scale. It is certain that no such miracle was wrought. The Apostles taught their catechumens as much Christianity as they were capable of understanding, and thereupon baptized them (cf. Acts viii. 35-38), just as the Celtic and Roman missionaries did to our Saxon forefathers. Further, after baptism, they *spoke wisdom among the perfect* (1 Cor. ii., 6), and put some of this wisdom in writing (Heb. v. 11-14). Yet certainly, neither in the Apostolic writings nor in the Apostolic oral teaching was all the wealth of the wisdom of Christ spread out to view. The treasure was delivered, as it were, in parcels and under integuments : the unrolling of it and the displaying of it was to be the work of the Church for many a day, even to the last age of the world.

The position of Mary in the Apostolic Church was conspicuous, and her office most important. She is mentioned as chief of the band of holy women who assembled, along with the Apostles, to receive the Pentecostal Gift.<sup>1</sup> Mary, I say, was chief of those holy women, widows, who became an institution in the Church, and almost a secondary order of clergy (1 Tim. v. 9-16).<sup>2</sup> Mary was principal witness to the human nature of Jesus, as the Apostles were witnesses to His resurrection and thereby to His Divinity. What witness of the Humanity of our Saviour so credible, so convincing, as the Mother who bore Him ? From her St. Luke must have had the narrative of the first two chapters of his gospel. It is not surprising

<sup>1</sup> So I understand Acts i. 14, *σὺν γυναῖξι [ἐλλαῖς τε] καὶ [δὴ] Μαρίας τῇ μητρὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ*. I believe classical usage warrants me in adding the words in brackets, not as what St. Luke wrote but as what he meant. Thus drawn out, the passage is rendered : "Together with certain women, and particularly with Mary the Mother of Jesus."

<sup>2</sup> In the *Testamentum Jesu Christi*, b. i., nn. 40-43, we read of an order of "widows taking precedence," who ranked above lectors and subdeacons.

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that as Mary was a conspicuous witness, so likewise she was a conspicuous object of revelation. Thus her virginity was the object of a revelation expressly contained in the Gospels (Matt. i. 25 ; Luke i. 35). We have no such explicit testimony in Holy Writ to her perfect sinlessness. Yet passages are not wanting to convey that truth, not obviously and on the surface, but by exploration of their inner meaning under Church guidance. Most famous is Gen. iii. 15, God's words to the serpent : *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed : she (or he) shall crush thy head.* With the rationalist, who will see in this utterance nothing beyond recognition of a fact in natural history, that snake-bite is poisonous to man, and man kills poisonous snakes so far as he is able, our argument would lie on more fundamental points of religion than that we are now discussing. The Christian will find a commentary on this passage of Genesis in Apoc. xii. 1-6, when we read of the *woman clothed with the sun*, and the *male child that is to rule the nations*, and the *dragon*, the enemy of both. The *male child, the seed of the woman*, is evidently the Messiah. Messiah and his Mother are placed together as one power, opposed to the *serpent* or *dragon*, which is Satan (Apoc. xii. 9). The enmity is thorough : there is nothing in common between the two opponents : there is all wickedness on one side arrayed against all innocence and justice on the other. But if Mary is thus to be closely identified with her Son, and put in utter opposition to Satan, Satan can never have had a hold upon her by sin : she must be throughout her existence *all fair, beloved, and no spot upon her* : she must be *full of grace* from first to last : she must be, as the Greeks call her, ἀμίαντος and παναγία, "unstained" and "all-holy," not certainly in intensity and essence, for thus God alone is "all-holy," but in extension of time, *i.e.*, "ever-holy." But to call Mary "ever-holy" is by implication to proclaim her Immaculate Conception.

For the various utterances of the Fathers regarding the Blessed Virgin, I would refer to Newman's celebrated reply to Pusey's *Eirenicon*. Doubtless, as he shows, there are a

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few expressions less in harmony, but the general tenor of what the Fathers say of Mary is accurately expressed in the words of St. Augustine: "Except the Virgin Mother, of whom, when we treat of sins, I wish absolutely to raise no question."<sup>1</sup> Mary and sin are not to be mentioned together.

But no Father says in so many words that the Mother of God was preserved from original sin? Certainly not, and no wonder, for, till St. Augustine and his school arose in the fifth century, the doctrine of original sin was not explicitly formulated. To take St. John Chrysostom as a type of the Greek Fathers, he shows acquaintance with the doctrine, but no one who reads his comments on the fifth chapter of Romans will find there that precision which would be expected of a modern divinity student writing a dissertation on the Fall of our First Parent. As Cardinal Franzelin shows in his treatise *De Traditione*, a doctrine is at first implicit and amorphous, then it is stated imperfectly and controverted: finally, out of the controversy arises clear statement and the possibility of authoritative definition. In the fifteenth century a worthy and good man, Cardinal de Turrecremata, wrote a book against the Immaculate Conception, which he presented to the Council of Basle. Turrecremata was quite right in part of his argument. The doctrine which he attacked was not the doctrine defined by Pius IX in 1854, but a doctrine which could hardly be held without heresy: it came to this, that Mary had no need of redemption, and actually was not redeemed by the Blood shed on Calvary, whereas Pius IX attributes Mary's preservation from original sin to the "singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Christ Jesus the Saviour of Mankind."

In 1591 the great theologian of the Society of Jesus, Francis Suarez, published his *Disputations in the Mysteries of the Life of Christ*. The third Disputation deals with the Immaculate Conception. From it I quote the following

<sup>1</sup> *Excepta Virgine Matre, de qua, quum de peccatis agimus, nullam prorsus habere volo questionem* (De natura et gratia, c. 36).

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sentences, a good exposition of the meaning of development of doctrine. I translate from the Latin :

The situation may become such that, without any new and explicit revelation, the Church shall have sufficient motives for defining this truth [the Immaculate Conception] on the ground of an implicit and tacit revelation of God sufficiently set before her. Of her own authority, with the assistance of the Holy Ghost, the Church has often promulgated definitions in similar controverted matters, without any new and express revelation. . . . For such definition it suffices that some supernatural truth be implicitly contained in Scripture or tradition, so that with the growth of a common consent in the Church—which [reading *per quem*] is the means whereby the Holy Ghost often explains traditions or declares the sense of Scripture—the Church may finally be able to apply her definition, which definition has the force of a sort of revelation in our regard by reason of the infallible assistance of the Holy Ghost. That such is the rank of this truth may readily be shown thus :—It is often indicated, as we have seen, in Scripture ; it is handed down by the most ancient Fathers, and, as is believed, even from the Apostles ; further, it is gradually finding acceptance with the universal consent of the Church, and that, as is believed, not without the motion of the Holy Ghost, who is teaching the Church by degrees that the fulness of the Virgin's grace is thus to be understood. This consent of the Church, then, may grow to such an extent as to enable the Church absolutely and simply to define the matter (Suarez, *De mysteriis vitæ Christi*, disp. 3, sect. 6).

From this utterance of the cautious and scholastic-minded Suarez we pass, over an interval of some 250 years, to Newman's *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, written at Littlemore in 1845, and carried by its author, or rather carrying its author, into the fold of the Catholic Church. Suarez's words are an apt preface to the *Essay on Development*. When Liddon delivered, at Oxford in 1871, his Bampton Lectures on the Divinity of Christ, he was troubled by a difficulty growing out of Newman's *Essay on Development*. The difficulty took this form : the clear statement of the Divinity of Christ in the first Council of Nice was a development from the less clear statements of the New Testament and of the ante-Nicene Fathers : by parity of reasoning, was not the definition of the Immaculate Conception also a development ?



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Were not the opponents of Mary's privilege playing the part of the Arians, who rejected as a novelty in doctrine Her Son's Divinity? Liddon I think succeeds in showing that the parity does not hold; that the texts for the Divinity of Christ in the New Testament are explicit and distinct beyond anything that can be alleged from the Bible in support of the Immaculate Conception. And no wonder, seeing that the Divinity of Christ is the foundation of Christianity. Liddon further argues that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is no legitimate development of Christian revelation: indeed, under the influence of the old Protestant idea, that all articles of faith are expressly set down in Scripture, he almost goes the length of setting aside development altogether. These are his words:

What do we mean by a doctrinal development? Do we mean an explanation of an already existing idea or belief, presumably giving to that belief greater precision or exactness in our own or other minds, but adding nothing whatever to its real area? Or do we mean the positive substantial growth of the belief itself, whether through an enlargement from within, just as the acorn develops into the oak, or through an accretion from without of new intellectual matter gathered round it, like the aggrandisement by which the infant colony develops into the powerful empire. . . . The recent definition [of the Immaculate Conception] appears to presuppose a Church which can do more than guard the ancient faith, which is empowered to make actual additions to the number of revealed circumstances, which is the organ no less than the recipient of a continuous revelation.<sup>1</sup>

Liddon evidently considers that the definition is an "addition," whether of the second or of the third kind; and he derisively quotes the words of Pius IX in the *Ineffabilis* (the Bull defining the Immaculate Conception), *nihil addit*, "the Church makes no addition" to the deposit of faith. Let us first set aside the third kind of addition, "by accretion from without, like the aggrandisement by which the infant colony, etc." There is addition and addition; and this addition "by accretion," is precisely the addition which Pius IX, equally with the Canon

<sup>1</sup> *The Divinity of our Lord*, by Dean Liddon, pp. 435-6, 442, (ed. 14, 1890).

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of St. Paul's, wished to exclude. There is no intrinsic reason why a colony should grow into an empire. That is an extraneous, fortuitous, and accidental addition. Very different is the "substantial growth," the "enlargement from within," analogous to the process whereby "the acorn developes into the oak." Primitive revelation not only does receive "addition" of that sort, it even postulates it, it presupposes it, and would perish if it did not receive it, as an infant would perish if not getting its food. The word "addition," however, in this sense, is an ill-chosen word ; we do not speak of the oak branches as an "addition" to the acorn, nor of the man's beard as an "addition" to the infant, because the acorn is potentially the oak with all its appurtenances, and the infant has in himself the promise and potency of the whole man. Therefore we say with Pius IX (Ecclesia) *nihil addit*, and we go on to say, as a gloss of our own, *sed multa explicat* : the Church adds nothing, but she developes much. She does not guard the ancient faith as our ancestors guarded their hoard of coin, in a strong box. Coin is not "barren metal" in these commercial times. Still less are the dogmas of revelation barren metal, dead things. They live and thrive under the guardianship of the Church ; they flourish and expand, but never change their identity. The Church is not the recipient of new revelations : she is the organ of the development of *the faith once for all given to the fathers* (Jude iii.).

## CONFERENCE XXXVI: THE CHURCH AND LIBERAL CATHOLICISM<sup>1</sup>

**T**O be liberal in the sense of “progressive” is an excellent thing. The Catholic Church is a progressive, not a stationary society. Every organism that lives, progresses. It adapts itself to its environment, as the human constitution to summer and winter : at the same time it overcomes the environment, bending it to its own vital purpose, or else it dies. There is a true sense in which from age to age the Church must adapt itself to the age, becoming *all things to all*. It has lived in the midst of absolutism, it now lives surrounded by democracy. It has lived among barbarians, among the illiterate, the unscientific, the unhistorical, the uncritical, the uncultured : it lives now at a time when not every one is cultured, but every one can read and will read, and when science, history, and criticism have attained a maturity compared with which the average medieval thought was but childishness. For any man who will keep his eyes open to these facts, and who still believes in the Catholic Church as the true saviour of society, this makes a most interesting situation, a situation of hope and fear, of alertness of mind, of keen scanning of our spiritual rulers, as the passenger watches the captain’s face in a storm, not that he wishes to take command of the ship, not that he is not prepared to obey, but he devoutly prays Heaven that the captain may prove equal to the occasion. It is true that, as a whole, the Church cannot founder and be lost, but her rulers and people may lose golden opportunities, she may be almost waterlogged, she may be humiliated, crippled, cut down. With thoughts like these we enter on

<sup>1</sup> The Bishops of England wrote a Joint Letter on Liberal Catholicism, 29th December, 1900. On 11th February, 1901, Leo xiii. addressed a Letter to the Bishops, fully approving of all that they had written. This Conference appeared in *The Month* for April, 1901, and was delivered at Oxford on the 21st of the same April. The Liberal Catholicism which Leo xiii. condemned, his successor has condemned as Modernism.

## THE CHURCH AND LIBERAL CATHOLICISM

the twentieth century, as on a time of extraordinary danger as well as of extraordinary promise.

There is that which the Church must always keep, gradually unfolded but not vitally changed : her dogmas, *e.g.*, that of eternal punishment ; her sacraments ; her essential discipline, *e.g.*, the Christ-ordained subjection of every human creature to the Roman Pontiff. There is much that the Church can change, if she will, *e.g.*, clerical immunities and the scheme of clerical education. She can change and she can keep : she alone can change by right, for she is mistress. As the eyes of the handmaid are on the hands of her mistress, so are our eyes on the hands of the Church in these matters of possible alteration, alteration and adaptation which it may seem to us is called for by the changed circumstances of the hour. Then it is for us to think and to pray, and not only to think, but to make sure of our facts ; and not only to pray, but to lay the facts before our ecclesiastical superiors. There is ample room in the Catholic Church for loyal and respectful representation of a policy of improvement, and for discussion of such policy among equals,<sup>1</sup>—so long as it is remembered that those in authority must finally decide. To be solicitous and prayerful, to collect information, to memorialise the proper authorities, all to the end that Church authority may understand the age and the race and local peculiarities, and understanding may command them and make Christ's way victorious in their midst, this is not to be a Liberal Catholic in any objectionable sense of the term : it is the behaviour of a Christian man of education and leisure, who besides gas and sewage and party will think of the Kingdom of God. Still even an intelligent and well-meaning adviser, while he supposes his superior liable to ignorance or unwisdom, should not forget his own liabilities in the same matter.

I believe, therefore, that excellent men in the past,

<sup>1</sup> I doubt if the non-Catholic and even non-Christian readers of our general newspapers and periodicals are quite the "equals" of the Catholic layman in his ecclesiastical position, and quite fit to sit in council with him, still less to be the judges to whom he should appeal. Surely, they have not at heart the advancement of the Catholic Church.



## THE CHURCH AND LIBERAL CATHOLICISM

men on whom papal and episcopal censure would nowise light, have borne the title of Liberal Catholics. We have often to tell our fellow-Catholics on the Continent that "Liberal" does not mean in England what it means in Italy or Belgium. To the word "Liberal" as the name of a great political party amongst us, there is of course not the slightest stigma attaching. But in the ecclesiastical sense evil associations have gathered about the word even in England. It is a label which the just can no longer hang about their necks without being confounded with others, who are not exactly just, who are not all that a Catholic should be. "Liberal Catholic" has fared like the term "Reformer." For a hundred years or more before the "Reformation," Reform was the watchword in the Church : half the labour of the Council of Trent is entitled *De Reformatione*. Yet for obvious reasons a Catholic in Edward VI's time would not write himself down a "Reformer" : and reasons are becoming obvious why one should not entitle oneself a "Liberal Catholic" in these days of King Edward VII.

I proceed to speak of Liberal Catholicism in the bad sense of the term, of the thing that Pope and Bishops reprobate. I find these three *gravamina* against it : it is *worldly*, it is *premature*, it is *disobedient*. To deny the next world is to cease to be a Christian. But one is not cast out of ecclesiastical communion for taking a preponderant interest in this world rather than in the next. Theoretically one might be able to hang impartially over both worlds, like a stick suspended horizontally by its centre of gravity. But the thing is never done. A man's heart and preponderant affection is in the one world or the other. His treasure is laid up here or in the hereafter : he does not serve two masters. The type of a Liberal Catholic is to be found in that Demas, whom St. Paul mentions as having left him and gone to Thessalonica, *having loved*, or rather *having set up his rest in, the present world*.<sup>1</sup> On opening the Papal Letter, I read : "The evils which you deplore, and which you warn right-minded Catholics to shun, have generally

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 9.

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their origin in an excessive spirit of worldliness" (*mundani plus nimio valere spiritus*). The Liberal Catholic would like to see the Church a popular and prosperous body, going for the most part with the stream of current speculation and human passion, not against it ; reproving mildly at times on ethical and utilitarian rather than on religious grounds ; hiding away the supernatural except for emotional purposes, never using it as an instrument of control ; not teaching, but discussing ; cheapening heaven, well-nigh abolishing hell ; taking away all fear of divine judgments ; and, while not denying miracles, relegating them to the extremest province of Christ's Kingdom, as things uncanny, barely admissible, little if at all raised above the natural order, rare, insignificant, offensive to cultured understandings, and the fewer of them the better. Such a Church would not be a fertile field of martyrs.

The Liberal Catholic himself, though expecting some day to be carried to his grave to the sound of the chant, *suscipiant te martyres*, is not of the stuff that martyrs are made of. He is eternally compromising, rearranging, adjusting, accommodating, giving away the properties of faith. Confront him with a Henry Tudor, and he would plunge into schism, as so many temporising churchmen did in 1534. For him the opposition of Church and world has vanished, as philosophers say, "in a higher unity." *You are of this world, I am not of this world*,<sup>1</sup> points, he thinks, an antithesis which should no longer hold. Anti-Christian books are his favourite reading, in anti-Catholic society he moves with grace. "He reckons nothing of what may be called the greatest punishment of all misconduct, that is, the becoming like to evil men, and in process of that likeness flying from good men and good conversation, quite cutting oneself off from all such company, and attaching oneself to men of another sort, captivated by their talk ; and, in consequence of that attachment, falling under the necessity of making and receiving such impressions as such men usually make upon and receive from one another by the things that they say

<sup>1</sup> St John viii. 23.

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and the manner that they behave.”<sup>1</sup> The Liberal Catholic for whom this papal and episcopal censure is intended, if he will look into his soul in a reflective hour, will find himself thoroughly worldly. He does not *seek first the kingdom of God and his justice*.<sup>2</sup> He does not look forward to death as to a going home, but as to a hard necessity. To him, going to heaven is like going to the workhouse, an alternative to something worse, when the rest of the cards are played out; and he little loves the company which he knows he shall find there. Worldliness is the root of his Liberalism. Worldliness is not a principle of sacrifice, nor is Liberalism generosity. As the Bishops say, he is “liberal indeed—with the rights and property of another—with the sacred prerogatives of Christ and His Church.”

In reading the lucubrations of Liberal Catholics I have often thought of some words that come in Terence : *Nec nihil est, nec omnia, quæ iste dicit* : “What he says is not nothing, but it is not everything.” The error lies in making one point into the whole case. Action, to be wise action, must be taken upon the whole case. Here the theorists are out : they drop relevant circumstances. Till these circumstances are met or removed, what they propose, however well reasoned, cannot be carried out. That is why every government, secular and ecclesiastical alike, lags behind its critics. Slight differences make great divisions among men. The differences are slight in speculation, but they yawn in wide chasms for the matter of practice, and men stand arrayed against one another on this side and on that of an abyss. The speculation may have been almost right; or, if very wrong, it still contained a certain element of truth : but the action taken upon it,—or the outcry raised because action was not taken,—was hasty, ill-considered, premature, because it neglected and flouted some other aspect of the question. There were good points in Montanism, Gnosticism, Novatianism, Manicheism; but the efforts of the supporters of these heretical systems were violent and premature : they aimed at precipitating the growth of the Church, at constraining grace, at

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Laws*, v. 728 B.

<sup>2</sup> St Matt. vi. 33.

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forcing the course of thought, which could not be done : but all their good points the Catholic Church was led by the Holy Ghost in due time to take up and to realise within herself.<sup>1</sup> Liberal Catholics are not heretics : but there is a lesson for them in these abortive attempts of early heresy, indeed of all heresy, notably of Lutheranism. The Liberal Catholic fancies himself in possession of a stock of fine ideas, which he would fain press upon the Church. Some of his ideas, I dare say, are good : many of them are worthless. Let him trust the Holy Ghost, whose action is to discern the precious from the vile, and to effect all good things in season. To the Liberal Catholic the Holy Ghost is as though the Gift of Pentecost had never been given. He would like the Church to dance attendance upon an impulsive and erratic public opinion, and, instead of advancing with the majesty of a Queen, to be hurried and haled hither and thither in captivity to the gentlemen of the Press.

But I can imagine a Liberal Catholic taking up his parable in this way : " If it had not been for the Gnostics, there would have been no Christian intellectualism : if it had not been for Sabellius, there would have been no exact theology of the Trinity : no Luther, then no reforming Council of Trent : does not this show *a majori ad minus* that unless some Catholic laymen kick over the traces, and use language in itself regrettable, ecclesiastical authority will never wake out of its torpor, and make those changes which the age requires, or withhold those prohibitions which the temper of the age renders unsuitable ? Did not a great English statesman of the last generation tell the Irish something about *ringing the chapel-bell*, which they interpreted to mean creating a disturbance even with some infringement of law in order to get their rights ? Is not this what we Liberal Catholics are doing, ringing the chapel-bell to save the Church ? "

I have drawn out this reply boldly and plainly, because I think it represents the centre and strength of the Liberal Catholic position. To all which allegation I would simply

<sup>1</sup> See Newman, *Development*, ch. viii. §. 1.



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reply, that you must not do evil that good may come of it. Luther was not justified before God by his having given occasion to the decrees of Trent. The overflowing goodness of God continually draws good out of evil: nevertheless, He punishes the evil-doer. He punished the Babylonians and Assyrians, whom He had employed for the purification of His people Israel. *Woe to the Assyrian, the rod and staff of my anger.*<sup>1</sup> Then again, unconstitutional action,—and Liberal Catholicism is against the constitution of the Catholic Church,—is always a wasteful way of doing good. The balance of good and harm resulting is at best uncertain. That little speech about the chapel-bell will not go down to history as the wisest of Mr. Gladstone's utterances. Fénelon, with his obedience, did much for the Church: but what good came of de Lamennais after all? It is written of the meek that they shall possess the land. Meekness is not spiritlessness, not apathy, still less is it a sulky inactivity.

We naturally take the government of our country and our own age for a type and test to try other governments by. It is a national prejudice, an "idol of the den." Thus there is nothing surprising in an Englishman expecting Church government to be formed on the lines of the modern British Constitution. But the Pope and the Bishops teach us that the government of the Catholic Church has been laid down by our Saviour and His Holy Spirit on quite other lines. Church government is monarchical and aristocratic. Church authority comes not from the people: it stands on the positive institution of Jesus Christ. The Pope and the Bishops represent Christ: they, above all other mortals, bear the place of the Word Incarnate still ruling on earth.

A Catholic is a Catholic to obey. Obedience interior and exterior, in religious matters, is the breath of his nostrils. By his acceptance of spiritual authority, more than by the matters which he believes, he differs from every other religious denomination in the country. To renounce the principle of authority, to withdraw from the

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah x. 5—12.

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obedience of faith, is to renounce Catholicism. The mere fact of a man's having diligently got together a body of religious truth, and accepting it as one accepts a system of philosophy, because it appears to him reasonable, does not make him an orthodox Catholic. He must further believe on authority, on the word of God transmitted to him by the Church, and to that authority he must submit absolutely for all the things of God that it bids him believe in God's name. We can receive no convert,—certainly, as the Bishops say, we should not receive one,—who cannot bring his mind to this pitch of submission. Their Lordships put the point thus :

If individuals had the right, in virtue of their own private reason or opinions, to withhold the "religious assent" demanded of them in virtue of "religious obedience," their assent would never be "religious," for it cannot be religious assent unless based upon the principle of obedience to a religious authority. Unless so based, conformity of mind with the mind of the Church would simply be the result of private judgment and a mere coincidence. Conformity of this kind might even cover doctrines which the Church teaches as Articles of Faith ; and may be found in persons who have never entered the Church. Indeed, such accidental conformity is compatible with a total absence of all faith. Such assent would then stand on no higher ground than that of a coincidence of private opinion with the belief of the Church. <sup>1</sup>

What is here called "religious assent" is wider than the strict assent of faith. It includes the inward as well as the outward acceptance of those condemnations which the Holy See passes upon doctrines by entitling them "erroneous," or "scandalous," or "temerarious" ; also the acceptance of the decrees of the Roman Congregations. This the Bishops point out, giving these instances of the *other gospel* of Liberal Catholicism : "That the Church's teaching should be limited to the articles or definitions of Catholic Faith ; that it is permissible to reject her other decisions ; to set aside her censures ; to criticise her devotions ; to belittle her authority, and especially that of the Roman Congregations."

I believe that any one who will clear his heart of

<sup>1</sup> P. 14.

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worldliness will escape the infection of Liberal Catholicism. It is an affair of the heart rather than of the understanding. A worldly-minded man has no hold on the dogma of the Incarnation. He may believe in it, and avoid any note of heresy on that score. He may hear the Athanasian Creed and acquiesce, though wincing somewhat at the damnable clauses. But he has the heart of a Nestorian or a Socinian. The theocratic rule of the Word Incarnate still continued on earth,—for such is the authority of the Catholic Church,—does not enter into his reckoning of life. He pays no more respect to his ecclesiastical ruler than he does to his civil ruler, if so much. He grumbles at one as freely as at the other. The methods of agitation, available against a Ministry, he considers equally available against an Episcopate. What does, *He that despiseth you, despiseth me*, mean to this man? The words and the occasion he reckons alike to have passed away. They afford no canon to regulate his conduct. Loyalty costs. A loyalty that stops at shouting is idle breath. But this Catholic, “liberal” in the sense of being a lover of this world, will pay no costly allegiance to spiritual authority. He will do nothing hard for the sake of it; and spiritual obedience undoubtedly is hard, and costs an effort to an educated man. He is no loyal, loving subject of Christ the King. When the vicarious authority of that King crosses his path in real life, he comes very near to crying: *We will not have this man to reign over us.*<sup>1</sup>

One must deprecate division in the slender ranks of English Catholics. The only union possible amongst us is in submission to the authority of our Bishops. Better forego for a generation what may appear to a man an excellent idea than divide the Church upon it. There will be Progressives and Moderates in every camp. The pendulum of the individual mind will oscillate from this side to that, sometimes swaying violently in one direction by reaction against the latest instance of excess on the other. We have to beware of extremists, of “fossils,” also of “faddists.” Against one class of extremists, threatening

<sup>1</sup> St Luke xix. 14.

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to lay impulsive, premature, irreverent hands on the Ark of God, this recent episcopal, now become a papal pronouncement, is directed.



## CONFERENCE XXXVII : "CLERICALISM"

I PROPOSE to take notice of one pseudo-prophetic cry, which happily we do not hear raised against the Church so much at home as in foreign lands, the cry of Clericalism. It always strikes me that there is a certain cowardice in the use of the name. If one is no believer in Christianity, and cannot hold his tongue, and will be aggressive, why not attack Christianity openly ? If one is an enemy to Christianity, why not call that "the enemy ?" Why rail against Clericalism, when it is the maxims of Christ and of the Gospel that one really hates ? Julian the Apostate and Voltaire were more honest opponents : they hated their Redeemer and his work, and they had the unhappy courage to say so. But there is a design in the name. It aims at a separation of the two orders which constitute the Catholic Church, the clergy and the laity, than which separation nothing could be more fatal. Such separation would make the Bride of Christ a leper : for is it not in leprosy that the flesh falls off from the bones ? And what are the flesh and bones of the Church but the laity and the clergy ? We read in children's tales of walking skeletons : but a walking skeleton, you know, is an impossibility : how can the bones bend one upon the other when they are not clad in contractile muscle ? Ossification is a disease of old age : it denotes decrepitude, and in certain cases, sudden death. The clergy, left to themselves to constitute the Church, would be a senile and dying body. On the other hand, the laity by themselves would be like some large animal without skeleton either internal or external, all muscle and no bone, an idle lump of flesh, good to eat possibly, but destitute of activity, there being no point of attachment for the muscles. So a laity without a clergy would be left without contact with the supernatural, such contact as Christ intended. There would remain to them

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only two Sacraments, Baptism and Matrimony. All supernatural authority to teach and govern would be absolutely lost. Thus the kingdom of Christ on earth would be dissolved. The Son of God became man to sacrifice Himself for mankind, and to govern mankind spiritually in order to their eternal salvation. When *he was taken up and a cloud received him out of their sight* on Ascension Day (Acts i. 9), neither His priestly nor His royal office were to perish from the earth. He put them both in commission, and He gave the commission to His Apostles and their successors for all time. That was the only ordinary way possible for Him to reign on earth. Government is carried on by means of what we call “ Services,” as the Army and Navy and Civil Service. The clergy are the Spiritual Service: through them Christ is effectually King and Priest in this world. Without them, Hobbes’s shrewd and wicked theory would come true, that Christ has no kingdom on earth, and shall not reign on earth until the day of judgment,—when perhaps He can no longer be kept out of His kingdom.

If then by “ Clericalism ” any one means the power and authority of the clergy in spiritual matters, and in temporal matters also so far as they directly and immediately involve spiritual interests, we can only say that Clericalism was initiated on earth by our Risen Redeemer, and confirmed by the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and must somehow endure, as the Church endures, to the end of the world. But if Clericalism means the isolation of the clergy, so that they are to go one way, while the laity fall off in another direction, Clericalism is the direst disease with which the enemies of the Church could wish to see her stricken. In the concord, union, and harmonious intercommunication of the two orders of clergy and laity, the Catholic Church finds her vigour, vitality, and perpetuity.

The union on which I insist implies duties and rights on both sides. I am not here to instruct you in your rights: it is at a clergy retreat, rather than at an academical conference, that one should draw out the manifold duties

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of priests towards their lay brethren. It is in my place to tell you something of your duties towards the clergy, who are in spiritual matters the governing and teaching order in God's Church. The idea of being governed and taught does not commend itself to the first impulse of our nature. Our first impulses continually rebel against authority, as they rebel also against reason. No man likes the first mention of perpetual discipleship in the things of the intellect and of the spirit, that highest region of human activity. The more capable we are of climbing in that region, the harder in one respect does it become to submit to be led and guided,—the harder, yet also the more necessary, for there is danger of a heavier fall. On the other hand there is this in favour of docility, that at a greater height we better discern the danger, and know how easy it is to slip and err. The less wary thinker is often the more indocile, and feels less need of a guide. However, there is no leisured and educated man, priest or layman, in these days, who does not require to keep sounding in his heart those words of our Master, who came on earth to teach us, who died to save us, and yet will neither teach nor save us except in His own masterful way and on His own peremptory terms : *Whoever doth not receive the kingdom of God like a little child, shall not enter into it* (Luke xviii. 17 ; Matt. xviii. 3 ; Mark x. 15). A little child is teachable and amenable to correction, and does not chafe at authority exercised over it. A little child relies on the superior wisdom of other minds than its own. A little child is willing to be told things. Envious is the lot of a little child under good instructors. But it can only profit by the good that encompasses it on condition of being a true child, teachable, corrigible, and believing. There is no other way to heaven than the way of the little child, a way untrodden of our *false prophets* and of the disciples whom they lead after them.

Our Lord has not bidden us become as little children without providing us with a good instructor. The Church exercises authority over us in two ways : one is the way of enactment, disciplinary and provisional ; the other is

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the way of definition, doctrinal, infallible, and final. The exercises of infallibility are rare ; when they occur, the definition follows the tradition that we were taught in childhood and have always held to be of faith. The *obedience of faith* (Rom. xvi. 26) in us is tried, not by infallible definitions of dogma, but by the disciplinary prohibitions emanating from the Roman Congregations to which the Pope deposes his authority. His infallibility he cannot depute ; and therefore no Congregation can rule a point of doctrine without possibility of error. We are bound in conscience to silence, when silence is imposed on us by a Sacred Congregation ; and if we are thoroughly loyal, ours will be a cheerful silence. Secondly we are bound, even as to our internal assent, to regard the decree as a *grave praejudicium*, a very serious motive for retracting any position that we are not quite certain of, and for severely reconsidering, and re-examining with some suspicion, the grounds of any position of which we had thought ourselves certain,—all this, though we be men of European celebrity and vast erudition, quite a match intellectually (which some of us are not) for the experts who advise the Roman Congregations. Observe, I speak of the decree of a Congregation, not of the ruling of a Pope *ex cathedra*, which binds our assent absolutely. The view that we have put forward may be true, but inopportune, and under present circumstances liable to create misconceptions. It may be true in substance, but imperfect in expression. And it may very easily be downright false. The newest and most up-to-date criticism is not necessarily correct. Criticism is continually undoing criticism. Much of the criticism of twenty-five years ago is as obsolete as the crinolines that were then in fashion. The Church is cautious, conservative, suspicious of novelties : that is the bounden attitude of the guardian of the treasure of truth. There are many thieves prowling round that treasure, many false prophets, vast hallucinations even in scientific circles. A true theory will take no harm for waiting outside the Pope's gate for a year or two. It will have a constitution strong enough to stand the chill. It



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will not melt away for a little cold water thrown upon it.<sup>1</sup>

A mark of a true Catholic is a great confidence in the Church. The Church may well say to us what our Lord said to His Apostles : *Let not your heart be troubled : you believe in God, believe also in me* (John xiv. 1). And again : *Have confidence, I have overcome the world* (John xvi. 33). To shake our confidence in the Church is the effort of all false prophets. The world is changing rapidly : the Catholic Church should change to keep pace with it, they say ; and they add, she does not keep pace with progress and probably cannot : her theology is obsolete, her history uncritical, her philosophy no true science : her administration is corrupt and feeble : her policy obscurantist. She must either alter her whole attitude, and be guided by the prophetic insight of these modern seers ; or she must retire into the desert, and become the asylum of the half-witted, the harmlessly fanatical, the stupidly pious, the mildly insane. With these prophecies in the air, the Church still lives. She survived the Reformation, she reformed abuses within herself, she proved fertile of great saints. Neither Reformation nor Revolution has destroyed her. Well may we Catholics be proud, that *strength and beauty are still the raiment* of our old Mother (Prov. xxxi. 25) : that the lapse of centuries has rendered the Church at least not less holy, not less true to the word of her Founder : that she alone is emancipated from the dead hand of antiquity, and is clothed with living, speaking authority : that she is not a Church of apologies, but of dogmas and of discipline : that she rules and regulates and possesses the land, and is not eternally fumbling for title-deeds. Surely that is the habit of a *domina gentium* (Lam. i. 1), an imperial *mistress of nations*, alike in the temporal and in the spiritual order.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the well-known words of the *Apologia* pp. 257-9.

## CONFERENCE XXXVIII : DO CATHOLICS LEAD BETTER LIVES THAN OTHER MEN ?

“ **B**ETTER ” is the comparative of “ good,” and is not such a simple term as it appears. There is a natural and a supernatural goodness. Natural goodness fits a man to be a citizen of this world : supernatural goodness, to be a citizen of the world to come. A character of natural goodness is such as you may see portrayed in *Tom Brown’s Schooldays*, or, apart from fiction, in the person of many an English gentleman and many an English peasant. It makes a man brave, honest, “ a man of his word,” sober, frugal, industrious, genial, helpful to others in distress, a kind father, a faithful husband, a patriotic citizen. Supernatural goodness consists in faith in God as revealed in Christ and in His Church, hope in God and predominant desire eternally to possess Him, love of God and of Jesus Christ above all other objects of affection, and love of all men in Christ and in God. Supernatural goodness covers that which is natural, commands it and exercises it on higher than natural motives. The characteristics of the English gentleman are all taken up and supernaturalised by the Catholic gentleman. Grace does not supplant or subvert nature, but presupposes and exalts it. The Church is a training-school of supernatural goodness. Catholics, as such, should be supernaturally better men than the rest of mankind. Are they so ?

A Catholic ought also to be a man of natural goodness and probity. If he is a liar, an extortioner, a drunkard, an unclean liver, the charity of Christ dwells not in him. But it is not fair to test his goodness in points of natural virtue alone. If a man puts up for being a classical scholar, you test him in Latin *and* in Greek, not in Latin only. Let me liken natural goodness to a knowledge of Latin, and supernatural goodness to a knowledge of Greek. The latter presupposes the former. Aristotle, of course, knew

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no Latin : but as education goes with us, “no Latin” means “no Greek,” and a good Greek scholar will be fairly proficient in Latin. But there have been and are fair Latinists knowing next to no Greek. And we see not unfrequently a growth of natural virtue abundant for all purposes of human society, without any sign of faith, or hope of heaven. In sundry respects of fortitude, generosity, good manners and the like, men of this stamp will surpass many Catholics : yet we cannot say that on the whole they are better men for God’s purposes,—and God is judge,—than are those Catholics. Superiority in Latin verses will not carry off and atone for total ignorance of Greek, in an examination for a classical scholarship. The preference is due to him who knows both Greek and Latin fairly well ; and he is the better man before God who joins the theological virtues to the virtues of the hero of *Tom Brown’s Schooldays*.

Of this I am confident, that if you look for the highest models of supernatural virtue, you will find them nowhere else than within the visible fold of the Catholic Church. The saints, canonised and canonisable, are there. “Heroic virtue,”—by which technical term theologians understand, not the valour that wins a Victoria Cross, but the state of consummate supernatural holiness,—heroic virtue, I say, is there ; yes, and I will add, it is there alone. This is the holiness that is one of the marks of the true Church. I cannot conceive God’s Providence leaving a St. Catherine of Siena in invincible ignorance of the fulness of Catholic truth, as I was taught it in my childhood. The best fruit ripens in the Master’s own garden. Confront me with the names of George Herbert, Bishop Ken, John Bunyan ; and I produce a counter-list of names, St. Vincent of St. Paul, St. Francis of Sales, St. Ignatius Loyola. Supernaturally considered, I have no doubt to which set of men the preference should be assigned. If you bring up such household names at Oxford as Keble and Pusey, I honour them, I believe the bearers of them to have walked before God in the paths of serene and domestic virtue ; but I know of one, their great contemporary,

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who truly described himself as "a man, . . . who has given up much that he loved and prized and could have retained, but that he loved honesty better than name, and truth better than dear friends" (*Apologia*, Preface xv.). I see in him, and not in the other two, the image of the Father of the faithful, who went forth from land and kindred and house to the new country that God had prepared for him.

A tramp, they say, is only one remove from a criminal ; a tramp for one season, and a criminal the next : so is a vulgar, frivolous, profane mind speedily beset with sin. There is less of spiritual vulgarity in the Catholic mind. Ideals there are better. The Catholic has juster notions of God, a closer personal knowledge of Jesus Christ, with, and in large measure through, His holy Mother,—a clearer discernment of what is sinful and to be avoided in thought as well as in deed,—ampler store of gracious and noble imaginings, the coming of which into actual consciousness best puts to flight temptation, whether of despondency and gloom or of sensual allurements. Who knows his crucifix as the Catholic knows or may know it ? Converts, when they come among us, find that they have much to learn besides dogmas, much spiritual upholstery to be proceeded with ere their minds can be furnished according to Catholic decency. Men outside often know our dogmas, yet they do not understand the Catholic Church, because their minds are almost empty of this spiritual furniture. They are like those draughtsmen who know the rules of perspective, and yet have no taste in art.

An amusing instance of this absence of supernatural taste was pointed out to me by a friend many years ago. There was an English missionary, I think, in South America, who came in for some foul ill-usage. I do not know what exactly was done to him ; but, whatever it was, he wrote an account of it to *The Times*, burning with indignation, and his indignation was just. The funny thing in the letter, as my friend observed, was how entirely the missionary was lost in the offended Englishman. How the man would have stared and fumed, had a letter, signed



## THAN OTHER MEN ?

“Subscriber,” appeared in the next issue of the journal, congratulating the reverend gentleman on having been privileged to drink of his Master’s chalice of suffering, reminding him that it was enough for the disciple to be as the Master, and how St. Paul wrote to the Hebrews,—converts below the dignity of missionaries,—*Ye have welcomed the plundering of your goods with joy* (Heb. x. 34). All this sublime consolation, I fear, would have been thrown away on the infuriated John Bull, for he was John Bull, and nothing more. It would have gone as unappreciated as Newman’s devout aspiration in the first Tract for the Times: “We could not wish them [the bench of Anglican Bishops] a more blessed termination of their course than the spoiling of their goods and martyrdom” (*Apologia*, p. 47).<sup>1</sup>

The better sense of the supernatural, then, goes to render the Catholic the better Christian, and consequently the better man. I will mention one more advantage on the Catholic side. As men go, we must admit that he is the best man who repents most frequently. Our Divine Saviour, indeed, when He was on earth, encountered a class of men who considered that they had no need of repentance, but evidently He did not think much of their goodness. In soul as in body, cleanliness comes only of frequent washing. When we call a man a “practical Catholic,” we mean that he makes a practice of the process of washing his soul by going regularly to confession. If he sins, he does not allow the filth to accumulate upon him, he clears it all away at frequent intervals. His at least is not the guilt of years, unrepented and unatoned for. Other men have no systematic method of repentance. Only by contrition can their sins be forgiven; and they are seldom taught about contrition, the necessity and the nature of it. How many men outside the Church must be bearing about them continually the burden of festering unforgiven sin!

Nevertheless Catholics may and often do abuse the

<sup>1</sup> This instance is not alleged, as it has been taken, to signify that Catholics always behave supernaturally, Anglicans never.

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graces of Catholicism, and in so far as they are guilty of such abuse, render themselves worse than pagans. It is as easy in confession to accuse yourself of having committed a sin twenty times as of having committed it twice ; and thereupon to argue that, inasmuch as such and such a sin has to be confessed, we may as well make it twenty as two. The penance assigned according to present discipline will not be very much greater. Protestants, on the other hand, have a notion that God will judge them according as their good deeds do or do not outnumber their evil deeds : hence, if they are God-fearing men, they dread to increase the number of their transgressions. A most irrational and ungenerous abuse of the gracious gift of sacramental absolution,—so indeed it is. What are we thence to conclude ? Why, that, short of the beatific vision, there is no state so holy that man may not damn himself in it ; no gift of God so precious that man may not pervert it to the vilest effect. People will abuse the Sacraments as they abuse wealth and beauty, and education and trust and authority. Judas abused his Apostolate to sell his Master : it were better for that man that he had never been born, much better that he had never been an Apostle ; and yet he was called to the Apostolate by Christ Himself. What shall I say of that still greater Sacrament in which the very Body and Blood of our Saviour is given to us ? to us, and not to the majority of our countrymen, who have the benefit but of two Sacraments, Baptism and Matrimony.<sup>1</sup> We have in that Gift life everlasting, or we have judgment and condemnation. If we are not much better for our Communion, we are likely to be much worse. The most fearful wickedness that man can live in is that of habitual flagrant profanation of the Holy Eucharist. All other wickedness may be expected to grow out of that. The highest places in heaven are taken, I doubt not, by Catholics, and I fear also the lowest places in hell, by bad Catholics and bad communicants. *Corruptio optimi pessima*. Herein I think we have the explanation

<sup>1</sup> Two baptised Protestants, validly contracting marriage, administer one to another a Sacrament, even though they do not believe in it.

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of the extraordinary wickedness of the Middle Ages, the wickedness that St. Catherine of Siena animadverts upon in her *Dialogue*, or that appears in the history of the conspiracy of the Pazzi at Florence just a hundred years later (1478). Reading the details of that conspiracy, one's mind is carried back to the factions in the island of Corcyra, described by Thucydides (Book III.). The whole Pazzi story would go well into the form of an extra six chapters of Thucydides : an ancient Greek would enter into it, and read it with zest and appreciation, as being just the sort of thing that he was accustomed to.<sup>1</sup> Yet the actors in that Florentine tragedy were all baptized Catholics : some were ecclesiastics, all no doubt made regularly their Easter Communion. History is a chronicle of scandals ; and we are not to judge the Middle Ages solely or chiefly by accounts that have been written not for our edification. But there was wickedness enough to make one feel glad at times that the Middle Ages are past, and that the lot of our lives is cast even in this hard and sceptical twentieth century. There was wickedness enough to culminate in the great apostasy, called the Reformation : wickedness enough to give colour to the paradox, propounded by some Catholic, that, in proportion to the population, more Englishmen have gone to heaven since the Reformation than before. A paradox is not to be taken seriously : it is a startling assertion, not without an element of truth in it, propounded to accentuate that truth and promote its discussion. I do not defend the truth of this paradoxical assertion. Still I should be the reverse of sorry if it were true : one cannot but be glad to hear of more people going to heaven. Its truth would mean that Catholics have been better Catholics for living under persecution and in conflict with heresy : and that a merciful Providence has led numbers of other souls under a twilight of faith to eternal happiness, whose fathers had lost themselves in the splendours of mid-day. The truth of it would also mean that there were many bad Communion made

<sup>1</sup> I refer to such chapters in Thucydides as III. 45, 82, especially the grim remark in the latter, καὶ ἐρέπεσε πολλὰ καὶ χαλεπὰ κατὰ στάσιν ταῖς πόλεσι, γιγνόμενα μὲν καὶ ἀεὶ ἐσόμενα ἕως ἀν' ἣ αὐτῇ φύσις ἀνθρώπων ᾔη.

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and many careless Masses said in the glorious cathedrals and parish churches wherein our Catholic fathers worshipped, and that is why God permitted a change to come over the land. But we are intruding upon sacred ground, and prying into the hidden judgments of Heaven.

This I will say in conclusion for your consolation : you will be better men for being Catholics, if you will and choose to be so : that you know well by experience. And further, your Catholicity affords a more sure and certain hope of salvation, and the prospect of a higher place in heaven for you than for other men. A sure hope of salvation, I say, because you are travelling by the normal and regular way to heaven, the King's highway to that blessed place : you are trusting to the mercies which Christ has promised to His Church, through the ordinances of that Church, the "covenanted mercies" of God. For "whoever wishes to be saved, he must before all things hold the Catholic faith." Other men have to trust to the "uncovenanted mercies" of God, and screen themselves from the wrath of the Lamb behind the excuses of good faith and invincible ignorance. You are, what all men one day will find they ought to have been. And there are valid and substantial grounds on which you and I as Catholics may aspire to higher places in heaven than others who yet do reach heaven. *Ye are they that have stayed with me throughout* (οἱ διαμεινηκότες) *in my temptations*, our Lord said to His Apostles (Luke xxii. 28). A Catholic, especially an educated Catholic in these times, stays by his Lord under stress of temptation and constant trial of faith. There is a head-wind against a Catholic throughout the voyage of life. Some men feel it more, others less, but most of us have something to endure and something to forego for our religion's sake. Therefore we may hope for our share in the promise appended, *that ye eat and drink with me in my kingdom* : for so the text goes on, saying, if we render the same reverently in Academical language : "Ye shall sit with me at the high table in my royal state, and the rest below." A further ground of this expectation is the sanctifying grace attached to the reception of the



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Sacraments. The more sanctifying grace, the more of heavenly glory. Every Sacrament, worthily received, imparts sanctifying grace, and qualifies the recipient for a higher throne in heaven, if he finally reaches heaven. But sacramental grace is a vast theme, and I forbear pursuing it to-day.

## CONFERENCE XXXIX : THE MAJESTY OF GOD

ALL Catholic divines are agreed that while there are certain names which we may truly apply to God, and God is consequently not unknowable and unknown, yet these names are not applicable to God in the same sense in which they are applied to creatures, but in a higher and better sense. This point is expressed in technical language by saying that predication holds of God and creatures not *synonymously* but *analogously*. The doctrine is important : it makes pantheism untenable. I refer you to the books for a scientific treatment of analogy. I am content to follow the more popular method of instances. There is an analogy then between the paper plan of a building and the building as it exists, and again between a kettle and a locomotive. Looking at a plan, which I proceed to fold up and put in my pocket, I say : " This is St. Paul's," or " Westminster Cathedral " ; and, pointing to the edifice at the end of Fleet Street, or along the length of Ambrosden Avenue, I again say : " There is St. Paul's ; that is New Westminster." It is obvious that plan and building do not receive the same name in the same sense ; yet there is some connexion and relation between the two, a relation of the less to the incomparably greater which it somehow exhibits and represents. You may spend a day in making yourself sensibly aware of the vastness of either of those buildings, climbing up and measuring from foundation and crypt to dome and cupola ; and then you go and give the same name, and are justified in giving it, to a slight sheet of paper, 20 inches by 14 ! Or, by a little stretch of language, you might call the kettle, when it boils, a locomotive engine. It is really capable of producing local motion : see how the unsecured lid flutters under the pressure of the steam ! But what a transition from the kettle to the locomotive properly so called, speeding its freight of many tons at fifty miles the

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hour ! If the kettle were endowed with consciousness and reason, and endeavoured from the study of its own capabilities to argue the nature of the locomotive on the railway, how far short would its idea fall of the reality of piston and crank-axle and connecting-rod and driving-wheel ! Yet our conscious kettle would have some elementary notion of its great compeer. So do we form from ourselves some poor little concept of our great God, in whose likeness we are made.

There are two orders, the conceptual and the historical. In the conceptual order, things *are* and *must be* as they are : five and five must be ten. But in the historical order of creation, things *are* only in the sense that they *happen to be*, τυγχάνει ὄντα. I happen to be a man, born on such a day of such parents : my ten fingers happen to be : Tom Tower yonder happens to be : Lord Salisbury happens to be Prime Minister in 1901.<sup>1</sup> Of one Being alone in the historical order can we say that He is and must be. God does not *happen to exist* : and He who is God does not *happen to be* God. God *is* necessarily and essentially αὐτὸς καθ' αὐτόν : and none other could possibly be God but He who actually is God. The term *being*, then, is applied to God and to creatures in common only by analogy. Of God, it means *must be* : of creatures, in the historical order, it means *happens to be*. This God signified to Moses, when He gave His Name as, *I am who am*, i.e., “I am the Being who really is,” or as the Greek happily puts it, ἐγὼ εἰμὶ ὁ ὢν (Exod. iii. 14) : hence the Incommunicable Name of God, so venerated by the Jews, “Jehovah,” or “Yawehh.” God is the Being, the Full Being, the Infinite Being, compared with whom none other can be said to have any existence at all. You cannot put God and the Universe into an addition sum. God and the Universe amounts to simply God, no more. The totality of being was not increased

<sup>1</sup> I am aware that doubt has been thrown on the ultimate validity of the distinction between the historical and the conceptual orders. It has been asked : If we could see far enough, should we not discern that all history is *a priori* ? At that rate, for aught I can tell, Tom Tower may be a necessary outcome of the thought of the Absolute. But *I speak as one less wise* (2 Cor. xi. 23).

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by creation. This is not pantheism. It is not denying that the Universe is distinct from God : but, distinct though it be, it is not an accession to God. God and all the works of His hands do not combine to make anything greater than God alone. Thus mathematicians will not allow you to add together the finite and the infinite : any finite quantity they will tell you, equals zero, as compared with infinity.<sup>1</sup> So the Scripture says of God : *All the nations are as nothing, and are counted as nothing before him : the islands are as a little dust*, and so are the stars, those islands floating in space, the multitude of them which telescope and photographic plate have discovered, vast and innumerable in boundless space,—the whole *host of heaven*, which He *leads forth* into being, and *calls by them their names*, as their Lord and Creator,—all together *are as a little dust*.<sup>2</sup> Plato did well to say of God, if by the Idea of Good he meant God, that the highest and amplest idea that we can form of Being falls short of what God is in dignity and power.<sup>3</sup>

I have spoken of what I have named for my own convenience the *historical* and the *conceptual* order. I have said that the one necessary existence in the historical order is the existence of God : all the rest of things happen to be, but might have had never any actuality at all. On the other hand, all the correct assertions that we can make in the conceptual order are necessary truths, statements of what is and must be and could not be otherwise. Of this character are all the theorems of number and space that make up the science of mathematics. I throw three onions into a kale-pot, then add two more : I must have put in at least five onions. There need never have been any

<sup>1</sup> In some sort we might say that Shakspeare *plus* Hamlet is not greater than Shakspeare, taking the poet's mind to be equal to the production of any number of such plays as Hamlet. That supposition would not altogether hold. Shakspeare's mind grew in the making of Hamlet : God did not grow in creating.

<sup>2</sup> Isaias xl., a chapter to read when the spirit is harassed and worried, and needs the calm of great thoughts.

<sup>3</sup> οὐκ οὐσίας ὄντος τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ἀλλ' ἔτι ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας πρεσβεῖα καὶ δυνάμει ὑπερέχοντος, Rep. vi. 509 B. Οὐσία, we must remember, was to Plato the highest ideal being, rising immeasurably above the phenomenal world.



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onions, nor any kale-pot, nor any *I* : yet, that three and two make five is a necessary, eternal, and absolute truth. These conceptual necessities are limits to actual creation, even when Omnipotence is Creator. God could not possibly create three onions, and then two, without having created five onions. Omnipotence could not reverse the truths of mathematics, nor indeed the principles of any science and their logical application to facts. If we are to have matter, we must have the laws of motion, and, perhaps, the law of universal gravitation. You cannot have matter without the essential properties of matter, although God may hide them away, or, by means known to Himself, defeat their appearance in a particular case. The more that science grows among men, and the more that any individual mind apprehends of science, the more do these conceptual necessities multiply before the view. They are, as we say, "in the nature of things." To every such necessary truth, or argument of what must be, there is attached an intrinsic impossibility of the violation of the same. These intrinsic impossibilities are more numerous and more ramifying than ordinary minds suspect. I remember the surprise with which I first encountered incommensurable quantities in mathematics, as the diagonal and side of a square are incommensurable ; and to this hour I do not understand how that impossibility arises : yet I doubt not, it is an impossibility even to God. So, again, God could not create a man to whom it should be natural, lawful and good, to indulge in cruelty, lust, untruthfulness, rebellion, and blasphemy. He could not evolve a polity that should not have for its proper end the people's good. This does not imply any defect of omnipotence in God : but we misrepresent God, when we picture His power alone in isolation from His other attributes and His essential nature, upon which is consequent the nature of things creatable. God is not sheer Power and arbitrary Will, as Ockham and the medieval Nominalists are said to have represented Him. Let us not caricature the Majesty of God.

In what I am about to say, I am not teaching any

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Catholic dogma, I am advancing a mere conjecture of my own,—I hope, not out of consonance with dogmatic truth. We can hardly raise our thoughts to God's Majesty without their reverting to the misery and sorrow and sin and evil rampant on this earth, to that contrast so bitterly pointed by the oldest of heathen poets :

ὥς γὰρ ἐπεκλώσαντο θεοὶ δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι  
ξῶειν ἀχυνμένοις αὐτοὶ δ' ἀκηδέες εἰσι.

*Iliad*, xxiv. 525-6.

At the bottom of all trial of faith this mystery of evil lies ; and it remains a mystery to every man till the hour of his death. Some souls are oppressed with it more than others. The best alleviation doubtless is to oppose mystery to mystery, and over against the *mystery of iniquity* (1 Thess. ii. 7) and pain to oppose the mystery of the Cross (Eph. iii. 9 ; 1 Tim. iii. 16), of God Himself in human nature suffering agony and crucifixion. What I have to contribute to the solution of the mystery is a philosophical suggestion, that may be found provisionally tenable. I suggest that a world all clear of evil is an intrinsic impossibility in the nature of things ; and that the reason why God never made such a world is that it is not makable, just as a world where the truths of number should not hold good is unmakable. When we cry to be rid of all evil from the outset, without an effort and struggle, we are as children crying for the moon. The most that God and nature can do for us is to put us in the way of victory over evil ; and to hold forth to us the prospect of a time of triumph, when evil shall be relegated to a region of its own, where none shall suffer it but they who richly deserve it, and have in a manner contracted alliance with it.<sup>1</sup>

I am led to conjecture the intrinsic necessity of evil, "patrolling," as Plato says, "all mortal nature and this

<sup>1</sup> But evil on itself shall back recoil  
And mix no more with goodness, when at last,  
Gathered like scum and settled to itself,  
It shall be in eternal restless change  
Self-fed and self-consumed.

MILTON, *Comus*, 593-597.

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region of earth " (Theæt. 176 A), not from any speculation on the nature and attributes of God, but from consideration of the abyss of nothingness out of which every creature is drawn. This kinship with nothingness clings to all creation. The creature cannot put off the traces of its origin, and its origin is twofold. Inasmuch as it comes of God, it has whatever of goodness and positive being there is in it. But inasmuch as it is drawn out of nothingness, there attaches to it from the first a certain defectibility, proneness to decay and failure,—in fact, evil. The life-work of rational creatures is to prepare their own emancipation from evil. If I am right, blank nothingness, τὸ μηδέν, should hold the place which Matter, τὸ ὀρατόν, held in the Platonic philosophy as the root of evil. Had you asked a Greek of Plato's school, or of the Gnostic or Manichean school in early Christianity, how evil came to be, he might have clutched a handful of sand and told you, " This is evil, all stuff of this visible sort ; and consequently all being which it goes to constitute is beset with evil : only pure thought is good." The Buddhist will tell you that thought is evil, and only some sort of ecstasy or trance, carrying perfect rest from thought, is good. We shall not quarrel with Matter, nor with Thought, for they are both of God. A self-existent Matter, such as Plato presupposed, would have been, as the Manicheans saw, another and a rival God. There is nothing to rival God : there is no self-existent Evil to counteract His goodness. Only one term, which we can hardly make an object of thought or language, stands out over against God, and is no creature of His : that is sheer Nothingness. If God creates a world, He must raise it from zero, out of nothingness. There seems to me to involve the impossibility of a world without evil. Take the speculation for what it is worth : think it out and refute it, or adopt and improve upon it, or forget all about it, or (which will be my fault) fail to understand it. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A further consideration is that finite perfections exclude one another. The wisdom of age is bought by the shedding of the fresh bloom of youth : the genial warmth of summer is not bracing and exhilarating like frost.

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This at least is certain. *Scandals must come* (Matt. xviii. 7), and *heresies must be* (1 Cor. xi. 19), and *against evil there is good* (Ecclus. xxxiii. 15), and one way lies open for us personally to overcome evil, the way of the holy Cross. *Sunt lacrimæ rerum*, but the vision of the Majesty of God will some day dry our tears (Apoc. xxi. 4). Till then, faith and hope in that Majesty, and such contemplation of it as faith renders possible, shall be our comfort on the way.



## CONFERENCE XL : FREE WILL IN GOD AND MAN

THESE Conferences are not controversial. I begin by purifying my intention, that is, by disclaiming all purpose to-day of controverting the opinions of any living man. I am about to sketch and find fault with a certain system of thought : but I do not know any man who would acknowledge that system for his own. It is considered unfair to charge a person with opinions which he has never uttered, but which you deduce from his utterances. He may quarrel with your deduction, perhaps justly : and even though the inference be correct, he may, however illogically, abhor and reject the conclusion. Why then set up what nobody holds, and attack an undefended position ? Because I seem to see tendencies of thought around me making in that direction. I mean my words as an anticipatory warning. You do not wait to put up a lighthouse till some vessel has actually gone upon the rocks.

Search the contents or the catalogues of an old library, and you will see how the course of human speculation winds and changes. Grace and free will and the fall of Adam occupied our ancestors, three centuries back. Whether Adam's sin had destroyed free will in his posterity, whether the grace of God overbore free will in His elect, were points fiercely argued in England and Holland, in France and Belgium, and nowhere more than in Scotland. All that interest has flagged and fallen : only faint echoes of the old controversies still reverberate in the Catholic schools. The theological aspect of free will has lost its charm for men who have abandoned all idea of grace, and taken up with Naturalism and Determinism. But, though men are slow to see it and loth to own it,—from reminiscences, I think, of the *odium theologicum* hanging about the question,—free will still remains the hub and centre of philosophical speculation. As I will endeavour

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to show you, modern thought in its zeal for physical science has brought the human will down to the level of physical things, making of it a department of cause and effect. The same thought on its metaphysical flight has invented a God destitute of free will. Whoever denies free will in man denies it also in God, and that not without some justice, for the same philosophy proves against both.

First then let me sketch a certain system of thought, and sketch it freely, unhampered either by philosophical truth or historical correctness, inasmuch as I take the system to be the negation of all that is true, nor do I label it as any man's system, nor impute it as a whole to any philosopher alive or dead. I only say that some system of this sort is looming upon us ; and some lines of modern thought should be followed with caution, as tending this way. The system may be expressed in four propositions, not corroborative but corrective of one another, each taking up and partially supplanting the proposition before it.

FIRST PROPOSITION.—*My thought makes and constitutes the objects about me. An object to me means sensations of my own, that have taken unity and shape by being run into the mould of some form of thought proper to my mind.* This proposition has its difficulties. It makes me the centre and sole mind of the universe, which I obviously am not. I cannot but distinguish other men's minds from my own. I cannot but admit the limitations of my own mind, and my ignorance of much that is. I cannot suppose that things began to be when I was born, or that the sun will cease to shine in the heavens when I close my eyes in death. These considerations lead me to take a step further.

SECOND PROPOSITION.—*It is the general mind of mankind that makes and constitutes objects. The world is, because mankind think it. All that really exists is the thought of man, not of this man or of that, but of the race.* That is a much more roomy doctrine than the preceding, and one breathes more freely in it. But it encounters two objects, God and Nature, both of them seeming to transcend even the thought of all mankind. One would not willingly deny God ; nor would one venture to affirm that Nature has

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not her secrets beyond the ken of mankind,—that there are not more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in human philosophy. Some of these secrets man age by age finds out : thus within the last forty years he has discovered something of the composition of the fixed stars. But every discovery tells him how much more remains to know ; how much is eternally and hopelessly hidden beyond the range of his scientific research, and is for all that. Then, for periods of enormous duration, the earth was without man's thought to help it into existence. The system proceeds further. It boldly identifies Man, God, and Nature, thus :

THIRD PROPOSITION.—*All that is, is the thought of God. Into this thought man enters, both as subject thinking and as object thought of. It is vain to distinguish things possible from things actually existent. We must say, with Hobbes, that nothing is possible but what is, has been, or shall be ; or, saying the same thing in other words, that whatever comes to be or happens, happens or comes to be of necessity, and could not have been otherwise. God thinks and necessarily thinks, and these divine thoughts are the course of the existent Universe, not a creation but an evolution of Deity.*

I pointed out last time that, if God creates at all, His creation must be according to the nature of things, in accordance with the laws of number and space and motion and morality, and other intrinsic necessities more numerous than we are apt to suppose, one of them perhaps being the original liability to evil that cleaves to a creature drawn out of nothing. I may add another example. There are those who distress themselves at the spectacle of animals eating one another, and wondering how Providence could have made such an arrangement. What would these good people have ? What else are animals to do, being animals, but to prey some of them upon others ? It is part of their animal nature to eat one another : take that away, and the animal kingdom would not be. Either God must not create animals, or He must create beings that prey on one another.<sup>1</sup> We allow the possibility of

<sup>1</sup> I suppose the text, *The lion shall eat grass like the ox*, if it is to be understood literally, represents a miraculous dispensation. We cannot expect the ordinary course of nature to be miraculous.

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God not creating animals at all. The system that I am exposing does not allow it. According to that system, the animal kingdom represents part of the *a priori* process of Divine thought, and not merely the kingdom, or class, but this animal and that animal to *n* terms, the whole series of animals that ever shall be, and in like manner all other classes of things, and all the actual individuals of each class, men included, those precise individuals necessarily coming to be, and none other being possible. And what is said of the existence of individuals, is to be understood of all their actions, of the entire life history of each, of every brute animal, of every tree, and of every man, as of the path of every drop of water and every flake of snow.

I remember as a boy reading a story, "Why the sea is salt." The story remained in my mind, not that I believed it, but because for many years I found no other answer to the question. The story was this. There were some people lunching in a boat out at sea. They had abundance of other good things, but they had forgotten to bring any salt. Some one thought of calling upon the *genius loci*, and presently a hand appeared above the water, holding what proved to be a small salt-mill. They took it in, and soon had all the salt they could desire. But they could not stop the mill from grinding out more and more salt. They were frightened, and had not the presence of mind to heave it overboard. The boat filled and sank : the men were drowned : but the salt-mill at the bottom of the sea went on grinding out salt, and has gone on ever since.

Now, however fond we are of the salt water for bathing purposes, we feel no gratitude to that mill. It has no kindness for us, no beneficent purpose in our regard : what else can it do but grind ? The Supreme Mind, in the philosophy which I am imagining, grinds out thoughts as that mill grinds out salt ; and these thoughts are the universe of things. The Great Mind has no will except to do its work punctually and regularly, grinding and spinning things and thoughts as they are foreordained and must be, without loving-kindness and without mercy.



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*Nec bene promeritis capitur, neque tangitur ira.*<sup>1</sup>

FOURTH PROPOSITION.—*There is such a thing as sub-consciousness. Thought may be sub-conscious, that is, half-conscious, or less than half-conscious, till the consciousness left becomes infinitesimal and unfelt, something like invisible light. Hence thought may assume a form undistinguishable from unconscious matter. Except as expressed in men and animals, and perhaps in the vegetable world, the consciousness of the Generating Mind of the Universe need not be any higher than that. Its highest expression after all may be found in man. Hence the notion of a mind superhuman and divine, conscious, intelligent, and volitional, origin of all things, may be ruled out of court as an otiose hypothesis. We gain nothing by calling the origin of things a Mind at all.*

Thus the system of Romantic Spiritualist Philosophy, which I have imagined, rounds off in the end into Materialism, *via* Sub-consciousness. Extremes meet. If any one is captivated with such a system, by all means let him woo it and take it to his own. I at least will waste no words in the endeavour to deprive him of it. The best refutation of a bad philosophy is clear statement and logical development. A philosophy that *doeth evil, hateth the light* (John iii. 20). Flash the light upon it, define its position, push it as far as it will go ; and it will go to its own destruction. Give it rope and it will hang itself.

I give you one piece of advice to save you from going all this length of evil. Put your foot down on the doctrine of the freedom of the human will, and stand fast by that. Save the dignity of human nature, and you will save the Majesty of God. By his exercise of free will, man dissociates himself from the material universe, as a being of a higher order standing out from an ocean of inferior things. Mix

<sup>1</sup> Lucretius, II., 651. Let me say again that in this Conference I am not dealing with any man's philosophy, only setting up marks to warn against conceivable shoals of error. Consequently, if it is insisted that the Supreme Being, however strictly His productive thought may be necessitated, is yet unlike the salt mill in this, that He is intelligent and takes pleasure in the good that He produces, and on the whole His inevitable action makes for righteousness, even as within our experience all intelligence aims at good and rejoices in accomplishing it,—I welcome whatever of truth and reason these concessions contain.

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up man with the universe, and you cannot keep the universe distinct from God ; in fine, you have all things in confusion,—*ἄμου πάντα χρήματα*, “chaos is come again.”<sup>1</sup>

There is a view which preserves free will in name, and destroys it in reality. Free will is said to be the untrammelled operation of a good character, choosing what is good ; while necessity is put down to mean constraint from without, especially constraint to evil by intimidation or deception. A man then is ruled by his own character, when he is left to himself, and not squeezed or driven by surroundings that he dislikes. His character is partly congenital, partly the result of his education. Acts go to make character. But if we enquire whether a man has the making of his own acts, we are told, No, they are made for him by his character and surroundings. Free will, if this representation, turns out to be an illusion. There may be good will, there may be pleasant behaviour and amiable conduct ; but free will there is not in man any more than in any other animal. This doctrine,—the doctrine of “self-determination” it is called,—is a form of determinism, and determinism as absolute as the necessarianism of that resolute and uncompromising thinker, Hobbes.

The Church provides us with no psychological theory of free will ; but the fact of the will of man being genuinely and effectually free is involved in the Church definitions of faith. Determinism in all forms, theological or philosophical, is heresy. Thus the third proposition of Jansenius was condemned as heretical : the theological necessarianism of Luther and Calvin was anathematised by the Council of Trent ; and John Wycliffe’s philosophical necessarianism was banned by Martin V. in the Council of Constance.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Gorgias*, 465 D : *Othello*, act iii. sc. 3, l. 92.

<sup>2</sup> Wycliffe’s proposition was *Omnia de necessitate eveniunt*. That of Jansenius : *Ad merendum et demerendum in statu naturæ lapsæ non requiritur in homine libertas a necessitate, sed sufficit libertas a coactione*. The view of “self-determination,” that conduct is determined by character, allows *libertas a coactione*, while denying with Jansenius *libertas a necessitate*. The Council of Trent (sess. 6, can. 5) has this canon : *Si quis liberum hominis arbitrium post Adæ peccatum amissum et extinctum esse dixerit, aut rem esse de solo titulo imo titulum sine re, figmentum denique a satana inductum in Ecclesiam, anathema sit*.

## FREE WILL IN GOD AND MAN

The Church, however, leaves us to our own psychology, so long as the fact of freedom is saved. In the remainder of what I have to say I am not laying down Church doctrine, but indulging in a little psychological speculation of my own. And first, to clear away some misunderstandings :

(a) An act of free will is by no means a motiveless act. No man can will anything but what he has some motive for willing. The reason why certain conduct is a sign of lunacy, is because no man in his senses could have done such a thing, *i.e.*, could have had any motive for acting that way.

(b) Free will admits of degrees, as consciousness does. As there is sub-consciousness, so there is half-freedom. It takes an effort to "make up one's mind," that is, to exert free will. Man naturally and gladly falls into certain grooves of conduct, from which, without some unusual motive, he will not ordinarily depart. Hence his conduct can often be predicted with high probability ; and the average behaviour of masses of men, with practical certainty. These grooves of conduct are ruled partly by human nature as it commonly is found, partly by the habits of the individual, partly by the customs of the society in which he moves. There are well-known places and times amongst us in which no member of the University will appear in cap and gown. In the absence of motives in any given direction, the conditions of volition do not obtain, and consequently not of freedom.

We must distinguish in act of human free will two things, the spontaneous impulse and the volition proper. Roughly speaking, the spontaneous impulse is not free : it is necessitated by our environment, by our natural temperament, by our character and past history.<sup>1</sup> This spontaneous impulse of the will I call a "complacency," or a "displeasure." This complacency or displeasure is either *speculative*, *e.g.*, a movement of regret for a past action, or of delight in something that is, apart from any

<sup>1</sup> I say "roughly speaking," because one factor in our past history is our own free acts, which go to lay us peculiarly open to certain impulses.

## FREE WILL IN GOD AND MAN

action of ours ; or it is *practical*, as when we are moved to take instantaneous action, or to resolve never to do a certain thing again. Free will, so far as I am able to understand it, is in the fixing of a complacency or displeasure. It may be compared to the fixing of attention, which, indeed, is an act of will. You cannot fix your attention except upon something that is already present in your mind, something that is at least a faint element in your present consciousness, *e.g.*, the chiming of those Christ Church bells at this moment. So a complacency or a displeasure must be already in the mind,—having come up there spontaneously and of necessity,—ere we can fix it, make it our own, and in a manner identify ourselves with it, that is, freely will it. The alternative is open to us of remaining dissociated from it, and refraining from all support or sustentation of it, and then sooner or later away it goes unwilled. This not-willing is something less than rejection : it is a mere negation, whereas rejection is another act. Our freedom of will lies precisely between these two alternatives, willing and not willing, not between willing and rejecting. You go into a shop : you take up various articles which the shopman offers you and lay them down again : you do not will to purchase, but you cannot be said to have rejected his goods till you walk out of the shop without giving him an order. Or some one puts apple after apple into my open hand : I do not fling them down, but simply let them roll out : at last I clutch one, thereby I will to have it. I could not have clutched it, had it not somehow come to be there. There is no willing except of a present complacency or displeasure, which has arisen in the mind spontaneously, from the senses without, or from some association of ideas within, or in some such way of natural necessity. Such at least is my conception of free will : but I warn you it is a much disputed matter : make your own theory, as long as you hold to the fact of free will, or hold to the fact without any theory at all.

A motive is a many-sided thing. As you look at it within you, you see all round it : you see its satisfactory side, you



## FREE WILL IN GOD AND MAN

see its deficiencies. You feel that you can do without the good which it presents. That good is not of vital import to you. The capacity of your rational appetite, or will, being  $x$ ,—and  $x$  is a very high figure,—all that the motive has to show is  $x—a$ . You may take  $x—a$ , if you will : but you may refrain. It comes of your greatness that you can refrain. Free will makes man a little god in this world,—a little god indeed, for free will in him is operative under many limiting conditions,—still a sort of δαίμων, or minor deity, rising superior to the physical order of cause and effect. And because of free will God is God and Lord of the great world of Nature, a world distinct from Him and infinitely His inferior, not the emanation of His substance, not the actuality of His thought, but the creature of His bounty.

## CONFERENCE XLI : THE MEANING OF THE WORD "SECTARIAN"

FOR the information of posterity, let us register this definition : "Sectarian" is a word by which an Englishman of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries described any pressure exercised in the name of religion that he disapproved of. Thus, if one party should threaten to come and wreck an altar as a superstitious object, and the worshippers at that altar should threaten to do to the heads of any who came to wreck it what they proposed doing to the altar, each party would stigmatise the programme of its opponent as "sectarian violence." The adjective is formed upon "sect," and that upon the Latin *secta*, "a following," from *sequor*, "I follow," not I think from *seco*, "I cut," though we do speak of the "New Cut."<sup>1</sup> The Latin *secta* means a "school of thought," e.g., Epicurean or Stoic : cf. 1 Cor. i. 12, *I am of Paul, and I am of Cephas, and I of Apollo*,—so many *sectæ*. The word is used in the Latin Vulgate of Acts xxvi. 5 : *According to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee*. It is twice applied to the followers of Christ, but not by Christians : *a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes : concerning this sect it is known to us that it is everywhere contradicted* (Acts xxiv. 5 : xxviii. 22). The Church never acquiesced in the name *secta* as applied to herself. She was not a school of thought striving with other schools, but a kingdom of faith : she was not a side-stream, but the main river. Besides, the Greek word that is rendered by *secta* is no other than the redoubtable *αἵρεσις* ; and *αἵρεσις*, a colourless word to begin with, as *secta* also was, soon became tinged with the meaning "heresy." "Sectarian" by its etymology, ought to answer to "heretical," and mean a stickler for private parties and peculiar opinions,

<sup>1</sup> *Secta* from *sequor*, as *ansa* from the old *hendo* (in *prehendo*), *capra* from *capio*, *fuga* from *fugio*, and *missa* from *mitto*.

## THE MEANING OF THE WORD "SECTARIAN"

opposed to common ecclesiastical doctrine and the received obedience. Such of course is not its meaning : but it remains a term of reproach, connoting narrowness and heady blind wilfulness. No, the action of the Catholic Church, and of a Catholic as such, is never sectarian.

Still it will often be called so by enemies, and we must look for the reason why. For a sample of Catholic teaching we will take the three last articles of the Creed : " the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting." These articles the Church teaches as truth, as certain truth, as saving truth, as mysterious and sacred truth. They are not mere topics of discussion, nice things to argue about, and dandle in your arms, and pet, and fling down again, like a teddy bear. These articles of the creed are life or death to the soul that accepts or rejects them. They are *μυστήριον*, that is to say, traditional knowledge handed down from a sacred source, a treasure, a deposit, a secret told us of God, not a challenge to human reason to criticise, but a command to believe. The Church is the guardian of this treasure and this secret : or rather, the Church is our guardian, and this *mystery of godliness* (1 Tim. iii. 16), which we take on faith, is our portion and inheritance of life everlasting. We are all minors *in statu pupillari*, as long as we are here on earth ; and, like other minors, we are liable to be overreached and cajoled.

Give grandam kingdom, and it grandam will  
Give it a plum, a cherry, and a fig. <sup>1</sup>

The Church, our guardian, interferes earnestly, persistently, to the utmost of her power, that a Catholic may not,

Like the base Indian, throw a pearl away,  
Richer than all his tribe. <sup>2</sup>

The efforts of her maternal solicitude to save her children are called by the word "sectarian." There are two classes of persons who apply this term of abuse. There are

<sup>1</sup> Shakspeare, *King John*, act ii., sc. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Id. *Othello*, act v., sc. 2. For the pearl see Matt. xiii, 45, 46.

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the indifferent and the careless, the frivolous and the scoffers, who consider that no religious truth is sufficiently certain and valuable to be worth making a fuss about : and there are the small minority who cherish a satanic hatred for Catholicism and Christianity. Both classes, but the latter especially, are apt to carry their anti-sectarian prejudice to quite as white a heat of fury as anything that they call sectarian. I anticipate that as the *καιροὶ χαλεποὶ* (2 Tim. iii. 1) of the last days approach, indifferentism on religious questions will disappear : men will take sides for Christ and His Church or against, and the struggle will be very bitter. If there is one thing clear in the Apocalypse, it is this, that the sun of human history will set in red ; and that the last age of the Church will be like the first, an age of martyrdom.

I am not apt to vilify the present time. Providence has cast our lines in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, not for us to rail and repine at them, but that we may turn the time to account. We could not do the work of our lives in any other age but this to which we are born. It has its evil and its good, as all past ages have had theirs ; and, like our forefathers, we have to tread our way wisely between. An evil of our time, I should say, as compared with the sixteenth century, is a want of "backbone" : I do not mean of athletic development and prowess, but of tenacious moral purpose in the conduct of life. The decay of faith has disintegrated character : instead of *ἦθος*, we have got a collection of *πάθη*. Losing touch with the unseen, man becomes blind to the severer aspects of this visible world : he becomes deaf to the more solemn tones of the harmony of the universe, because he turns a deaf ear to the word of God. Instead of the two tables of the law, given on Sina and confirmed in the Sermon on the Mount, mankind have graven for themselves new tables, a substitute for the Ten Commandments. The first table we may describe as bearing engraved upon it these three precepts : *Seek pleasure, shun pain, detest cruelty*. The second table contains this one precept only : *You must somehow get money*. As life advances, this second table



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grows to be much the weightier part of the law. A law this is neither of love nor of duty : it is no inculcator of unselfishness : it will never make a man of principle. Without principle, no one can be counted upon to do his duty either to society or to God. But what principles shall inspire and vivify, and make active and perennial, our performance of duty ? The principles of moral philosophy ? I am not the man to depreciate moral philosophy. I will take it as far as ever it will go. Does not the Apostle tell us that whatever things are true, whatever things are venerable, whatever things are just, every virtue and every matter of praise, these things we are to take account of and regulate our practice by them (Phil. iv. 8) ? Whatever is a motive for any good man, is a motive for us. We are not Christians to divorce ourselves from the natural virtues and graces. We will not weakly allow these good endowments of nature, gifts of God, to fall into the sole possession of the enemy, and to be used as ammunition to batter Christianity. They are ours as much as they are any man's. As though, forsooth, one were baptized to the undoing of one's manhood and ceased to be human, in following the footsteps of God made man ! Moral philosophy, with its conceptions of the " noble life " and the " better self," may break your fall and prevent your rolling down all depths of the abyss of turpitude : but will it keep you from falling ? will it recover you after you have fallen ? will it restore your innocency ? We need every defence, and every safe-guard, natural and supernatural, and withal a ladder of repentance : but true repentance, in the present order of Providence, is a supernatural process, and presupposes true religion and some faith in God's word. Be *strong in faith*, St. Peter says, for *the devil walks* : be *watchful and resist* (1 Pet. v. 8, 9). Over and above moral principle, you need a sturdy faith : which sturdiness in faith is branded by the unbelieving with the epithet " sectarian."

One of the most melancholy sights I ever saw on paper was a picture in an illustrated magazine of an orgy of French nobles in a champagne cellar in the time of

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Louis XV. There they sat, those blue-blooded men, in their long, embroidered coats, with the great tuns of wine about them, drinking themselves as "drunk as lords." I would not say, such were all the old *noblesse*, but such were many of them, unprincipled and self-indulgent; and the common people saw them for what they were worth; and God made the forces of revolution the instrument of their chastisement. What future is in store for us this century? A future of wars that shall wreck our civilisation, and, as in France in 1871, social catastrophe consequent upon war? I am no prophet, I only surmise. And this is my surmise, that in England at least the classes will continue to lead the nation so long as they show themselves worthy of the headship, and not for any very long time after they have proved themselves, if ever they do prove themselves, flagrantly unworthy and worthless. With us, happily, classes and masses shade into one another by many gradations: there is no hard and fast line of birth, no caste-system, and individuals pass from the one division to the other. But, unless I am mistaken, the masses are on the alert, in a watchful, judicial mood; and the classes are on their trial. It behoves you then, nay it is your interest as English gentlemen, to be men of principle, men of moral backbone. And if you stand not on the principles of the Catholic faith, what morality shall save you? For you, are not the supernatural and the natural bound up and welded together, steady Catholicism with high morality? Steady Catholicism is nicknamed in the world "Sectarianism." But sectarianism it is not. Alike by etymology and in actual experience, sectarianism is the vehemence of heresy.

## CONFERENCE XLII : INTERCESSORY PRAYER

**I**F there is one truth plain in the Bible,—held in common by Catholic and Protestant,—never denied by any heretical sect,—a truth at the basis of all religions, excepting only the so-called “Religion of Humanity,”—it is the truth that God hears prayer and shows mercy to those who ask for it. Of the promises of Christ none is more emphatic and distinct than this, that our prayers shall be heard and our petitions granted. Any philosophy which exhibits such a view of God as to render the prayer of petition useless as a means of procuring the thing asked for, is an irreligious philosophy in this sense, that it stands in fundamental disagreement with all religions that have been hitherto. What is a religion if it is not a means of putting a man in communication with God, and of gaining the ear of the Most High ? Like every other truth, this truth that God gives men what they pray for has its limitations and explanations. But there is fear of our attending more to the limitations than to the substance, and adding explanation upon explanation till the dogma is dissolved, as though it were an accusation against God and a slur upon His dignity, an insult to physical science, an opening to be marked “no thoroughfare,” no available road to human good. I must put in limitations and explanations, but I will endeavour, while providing them, to add thereby to the clearness and convincingness of the original promise, *Ask and you shall receive*.

There are certain canons of necessity and fitness, harmony, and proportion, and propriety, which God never will violate, asked or unasked. God is utterly misconceived by those who profess to see in Him mere arbitrary Will and Power, or blind Bounty, and therefore expect of Him reckless concessions. “Give me, O God, the kingdom of heaven without my working for it, or suffering for it, or taking any trouble about it.” What an absurd prayer that

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would be ! The laws of God's Providence do not admit of the attainment even of earthly distinction and success at that vile rate. " Cheap " and " nasty " go together ; and " magnificent " and " costly." *The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence* (Matt. xi. 12). The rule presses inexorably upon all who enter there. Upon none did it press so heavily as upon the King Himself. *Was it not necessary for Christ to suffer these things (to drink the chalice that He had cried to have taken away, if possible, John xviii. 11 ; Luke xxii. 42), and so to enter into his glory (Luke xxiv. 26) ?* We do not quite banish suffering by prayer. But it is unmanly to fret about it, it is unchristian to brood over the prospect of suffering : we take suffering as it comes, and wait for its coming, as the condition of our mortal service. But there would be far less of suffering, if there were more prayer. In like manner, prayer does not supersede action, but guides and sustains it ; nor prudence, but makes good its deficiencies. The most industrious and business-like persons are seen sometimes to be the most prayerful. And where such men are not prayerful, what errors do they commit, errors I mean from God's point of view ! and such errors are always brought home to their author in the end. I know of no better agent of spiritual reform, reform of oneself, and of the world about oneself, than human ability and industry, directed hour by hour by the Holy Ghost, that is to say, directed hour by hour by prayer,—for the Holy Ghost comes where He is called.

Our prayers are heard inasmuch as they are petitions prompted by the Holy Ghost *for the saints according to God* (Rom. viii. 27).<sup>1</sup> We live under a supernatural providence. What God has in view in all that he grants us in mercy is, not our comfortable establishment in this life, but our passage through this life to a better. Friends and kinsmen were once gathered round the deathbed of one who was dying in severe and continual pain. They joined in prayer that the dying person might have one poor half-hour free from pain before death : it was not granted. Bound your horizon with death, and the refusal seems

<sup>1</sup> That is, for Christians in order to salvation.



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hard : look to eternity beyond, and you can hardly wonder. The centre of final good, to which all events of life are referable, is a sort of origin of co-ordinates : move this centre and origin, and all your calculations have to be readjusted. Thus I move the origin from zero to a point describable as  $a x + b y$ . I must henceforth carry the formula into all my reckonings. And if so it be that the values of  $a$  and  $b$  are but imperfectly known to me, all my calculations will be so far uncertain. Now we do not know at all definitely what temporal blessing will be a help and not a hindrance to our eternal salvation, or how far our salvation needs securing or perfecting by a course of temporal sorrows. Therefore we must not expect in prayer to dictate absolutely to God our way and our fortunes through life. The main burden of our prayer must ever be according to those verses of St. Thomas's hymn at Matins on Corpus Christi Day :

*Per tuas semitas duc nos quo tendimus  
Ad lucem quam inhabitas :*

“ by paths which Thou knowest, but we do not, lead us to the goal of our efforts, to the light wherein Thyself dost dwell.”

When we pray and ask for ourselves simply what makes for our eternal salvation, and that with earnestness and perseverance, we are always heard. Hearty prayer, continually kept up, that we may find and embrace the way of salvation, will in the end overcome any repugnance of our own will to take that way. The very effort of praying implies that our will is already partially made up to do that which we are praying to be enabled to do : such a prayer, if continued, will in the end beat down any outstanding resistance. This remark has its value in those hesitations that attend upon conversion to the true Catholic faith, or the embracing of the ecclesiastical or religious state, when one has a vocation to it. We cannot be so certain of the result in praying for another. There it is a matter of two distinct wills, one trying to move, the other perhaps refusing to stir : there is a sort of tug of war : his insistence may be as

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great as ours. There is a strength of obstinacy which even God Himself will not break (cf. 1 John v. 16). At the same time, the fact of our feeling strongly and abidingly moved to pray for a particular person is ordinarily a sign that God intends to show that person mercy through our prayers, though it may be in a way that we shall never know in this life. Thus St. Monica was heard, praying for her pagan husband Patritius, and for her erring son Augustine. The race of Monicas never dies out in the Church : they have much to bear and long to wait, but their tears fall not in vain. It is found impossible in the high dooms of Heaven for the child, or husband, of so many tears to perish.<sup>1</sup>

Prayer for the Church as such, though not for one particular work that you may wish to see prosper in the Church, is always heard. Christ loves His Church : He may perhaps not love, or wish under the circumstances, that particular work. May I exhort you in your years of weight and gravity to come, when you are tempted in an after-dinner hour to hack and slash your spiritual teachers with the sword of the tongue, to hold off from that unedifying operation, and use your tongue and still better your tears to intercede on their behalf before God, that they may have light and efficacious grace to do what you conceive to be the good they are leaving undone ? Be not afraid to particularise : your prayer will be more earnest for descending into precise particulars. But remember, a course is not the better course unless it is the better course under the circumstances, and will prove the better course in the long-run. What you are so bent upon, may be the better course in the abstract, or ideally, but the worse course to try under the circumstances that press. What you are so impatient for, may be apt only to create a momentary benefit, soon to be wiped out in disaster. Anyhow, pray, and God will remedy the grievance, either with your remedy or with His own.

This Octave of Corpus Christi reminds us that the centre of prayer on earth is the altar where Mass is said. Round that altar are gathered all the needs of the world,

<sup>1</sup> St. Augustine's *Confessions*, end of the third book.

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needs of Catholics nearest the altar, needs of other men forming the outer fringe. The central act of propitiation and impetration is the Holy Sacrifice. For every Mass that is said, the Victim, who is also the principal Priest, has His own intentions, known to Himself. These we call the intentions of the Sacred Heart in the Sacrifice of the Mass. The Apostleship of Prayer, as it is called, is an association of persons who undertake every morning to offer all their actions and sufferings of that day in union with these intentions of the Sacred Heart, the intentions for which Jesus Christ is unceasingly offering Himself in the ceaseless round of Masses that are said all the world over. Such is the exact form prescribed for the devotion of the Apostleship of Prayer by Leo XIII. If there is a theological devotion, this is one : all things with and through Jesus Christ. If there is effectual impetration anywhere ascending from earth to heaven, it ascends from the altar during the celebration of Mass. No devotion can be less burdensome than this, which exacts no form of words, no attitude of body, which may be accomplished in an instant, and may any instant be renewed. It is apt to convert our whole life into intercessory prayer. It is well called an Apostleship, because it fertilises the labours of the successors of the Apostles. Prayer is as necessary as those labours themselves. What the Sacred Heart of Jesus intends, He will not carry into effect, unless men labour, and unless men pray. Who knows but what our Divine Saviour may have intentions of vast mercy, *thoughts of peace and not of affliction* (Jerem. xxix. 11) for our loved Alma Mater, the University of Oxford ? Into those intentions of His Sacred Heart we will enter, practising all day long the Apostleship of Prayer.

## CONFERENCE XLIII : THE LAW OF GOD

THERE is a Platonic antithesis, called the *way up* and the *way down* : the *WAY UP* from the many to the one, as from many things equal to the one ideal equality, and, similarly, the *WAY DOWN* from the one to the many. Without any great alteration of meaning, we may take the *way up* for the way of argument from created experience to God, and the *way down* for the argument from God to things of our experience. Now, which of these is the right method with moral experiences ? Do Ethics presuppose God or prove Him ? In other words, is Moral Philosophy anterior or posterior to Natural Theology in the order of sciences ? I am inclined to say that it is anterior. I have always disliked theological proofs of ethical conclusions. Such proofs are easier to the believer, but less satisfactory to the thinker : they are less painfully scientific.<sup>1</sup> Moral philosophy is a distinct science from theology, and has proper demonstrations of its own, which are not theological.<sup>2</sup> But it has many relations with theology ; and thus the moral philosopher is under the necessity of either demonstrating the existence of God from the facts of moral experience, or of assuming Him to exist as a conclusion to be proved hereafter in another science. He must either take the *way up* on his own initiative, or crave permission to follow the *way down*.

Cardinal Newman, in a celebrated passage (*Grammar of Assent*, pp. 105 seq.) undertakes to prove God from our moral experiences. He distinguishes "both a critical and a judicial office of conscience." Conscience is "critical" of comeliness or deformity of conduct. Here we have the connexion of morality with Art. "Judicial" conscience

<sup>1</sup> E.g., the argument against suicide, that it is a violation of the dominion of God.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. St. Thomas, 1a, 2æ, q. 71, art. 6, ad 5 : "By theologians sin is considered principally as it is an offence against God ; but by the moral philosopher, inasmuch as it is contrary to reason."



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pronounces on an act as conformable to or in violation of Law, and thereby as an obedience to or a defiance of a Lawgiver, and Him a Person. "If, on doing wrong," says the Cardinal, "we feel the same tearful, broken-hearted sorrow which overwhelms us on hurting a mother; if, on doing right, we enjoy the same sunny serenity of mind, the same soothing, satisfactory delight which follows on our receiving praise from a father, we certainly have within us the image of some person, to whom our love and veneration look, in whose smile we find our happiness, for whom we yearn, towards whom we direct our pleadings, in whose anger we are troubled and waste away." A disciple of Mill will scoff at all this as representing no more than "peculiar education and heredity."<sup>1</sup> But even he must cry out in admiration as he reads: What a good man John Henry Newman was! how thoroughly and how beautifully conscientious! Newman, then, had had an education of the right sort, and inherited those hereditary qualities which are the making of a good man. But the quality of a good man is the quality of man absolutely, according to the Aristotelian rule (*Nic. Eth.* i. 1098a). "The function proper to any particular kind is the function of the good specimen of the kind: thus the function of the musician is the function of the good musician." It is the same thing therefore to say, "A good man's conscience tells him so-and-so," and "A man's conscience tells him so-and-so." No matter how the good man came to have such a conscience, it is the conscience which every man ought to have: it is the normal human conscience, and therefore the proper basis of a valid argument from conscience. It is the conscience of the truly conscientious.

In Newman's argument from conscience, we have found a *way up* from moral experience to the recognition of a personal God: now, following the *way down*, we will consider how the recognition of a personal God affects morality as we have hitherto viewed it. The beauty which we have observed in certain human behaviour,—*e.g.*, in

<sup>1</sup> The scoffer receives his merited castigation at the hands of John Grote, *Examination of Utilitarian Philosophy*, pp. 169, 207, 208.

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the liberality of the poor widow who threw her two mites into the treasury (St. Luke xxi. 2),—is not a sensuous thing, it is not fathomed by sense as such, it belongs to the intellectual order, it is a reasoned thing, it is something scientifically correct. Morally beautiful conduct is sometimes required by reason, the opposite being positively irrational, as the betrayal of a friend : it is always commended by reason, even when not required, as the liberality of that poor widow. But God is Reason, λόγος ἔμφυχος καὶ κύριος, Reason Living and Supreme. What Reason commends, He approves : what Reason requires, He commands ; and what Reason bans, He forbids.<sup>1</sup> Thus we pass in morality from the realm of health and disease, and the realm of beauty and ugliness, to the realm of fully developed right and wrong, the realm of Law. *Sin is law-breaking*, St. John says (ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία, 1 John iii. 4).

I have heard it maintained that all mention of Law is foreign to the theory of morals. Thus much may be conceded, that the discernment of moral *good* and *evil* may be proceeded with without consideration of Law ; not so, however, the analysis of moral *obligation*, and of *crime*, or *sin*.<sup>2</sup> Handsome and wholesome conduct is also rational conduct, and likewise is requisite conduct,—conduct required as well by the reason of the agent, as also by that Supreme Reason, of which the reason of the individual is a reflection and copy,—I mean the Living Reasonableness, which is God. You cannot affirm God with any understanding of what you are affirming, and deny Him to be the Moral Law-giver. If you will forbear all reference to God, then you can call morality a law only in so far as it is commanded by the civil magistrate, which was the real opinion of Hobbes.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the difficulty, which may suggest itself, of distinguishing a blunder from a sin, both being irrational, see *Moral Philosophy*, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> See my *Moral Philosophy*, pp. 124, 125, and the preface to the last edition (1905).

<sup>3</sup> "Real opinion," I say, because Hobbes is profuse in Scripture quotation, and makes frequent mention of the Deity. But Deity does not enter into the construction of his system, it is a mere παράφραγμα, or advertisement. Take Deity away, and Hobbism remains.

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Law may be defined, "a stable ordinance of reason, emanating from the authority that is supreme in a perfect community." "Stable," not a decree to meet a passing emergency. "Of reason," because we define a good law, as in zoology a good horse. Every law-giver is "supreme" in his own sphere. And that sphere must be a "perfect" or self-sufficient (αὐτάρκης) community, the equivalent of a commonwealth or State.<sup>1</sup> The Law of God is either Natural Law, which must be,—the Natural Law is the Moral Law, and God Himself cannot ordain it otherwise, or dispense from it, *e.g.*, the precepts of truthfulness, purity, religion,—or it is Positive Law, which might not have been, as the precept of baptism. The Moral Law of God, answering to the exigency of rational nature within us, we may find out by reason : the Positive Law of God can only be promulgated to us through some channel of revelation : it cannot be argued *a priori*, not being a thing that must be. We are not incompetent to discern our own needs ; and morality, it has been well said, is as needful to human nature as bread and cheese. Morality must be found out, and God must be found out : both the one and the other are necessities for any true human life. Without virtue and godliness, man is no better than a beast. When God and Morality are discovered, the connexion between them cannot but be perceived. God must be a moral God, who loves justice and hates iniquity, *justus et rectus Dominus*. It will be said that the deities of savage races were not moral beings, but capricious and vindictive spirits, while the deities of the Greeks were glorified profligates. Individually, in many cases, yes : but when they were viewed as a collective whole, to that whole there was assigned no immoral attribute. Or, again, a Power was thought of higher than and distinct from these sprites and goblins, these δαίμονες and θεοί, and that (ὁ θεός, τὸ θεῖον) was a Power making for righteousness.

Among primitive races, morality is a tradition of "dooms," and rules that have come down from remote

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Moral Philosophy*, pp. 126-128.

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ancestors. It is not a list of reasoned conclusions, or maxims of art and science. And still, to the majority of our contemporaries, morality is more readily conceived under the aspect of traditional law than under any philosophical, hygienic, or æsthetic aspect. The ordinary Englishman knows the Ten Commandments : but decorum and moral wholesomeness he leaves to the parson and preacher, as stuff for sermons, or, haply, leading articles. We know from Holy Scripture that the substance of the Ten Commandments was revealed by God to the first father of our race. We read in Ecclesiasticus xvii. 1-14, how God showed our first parents things good and evil, how He gave them as an inheritance a law of life, how He showed them His judgments, how He bade them beware of all iniquity, and how He gave every man commandment concerning his neighbour.<sup>1</sup> To what extent this teaching became traditional among Adam's descendants, how far down the tradition went, how widely it spread, we cannot determine, The book of Genesis is not an *Histoire Universelle*, it is a book of genealogy, tracing with many omissions the line and course of a particular family from which Abraham was descended, the Jewish people, and ultimately the Messiah. Of Adam's children, scattered and running wild, converting solitudes into slums, and there degenerating amid vile surroundings, there is but the briefest passing notice in Holy Scripture.

We come to the giving of the Law to the Jewish people, as related in Exodus xix., xx. The law given on Sina was threefold, moral, ceremonial, and judicial.<sup>2</sup> The moral law was the Ten Commandments, as it were ten categories of Natural Law, binding upon all mankind, excepting the particular precept of the Sabbath. The ceremonial and the judicial portions were Positive Law, given of God to the Hebrew people only, the one

<sup>1</sup> This last injunction seems pointed at Cain's *Am I my brother's keeper?* about the most immoral exclamation a man could make, being a disclaimer of justice and charity and natural affection. Plato's typical bad man is one "unlovable of man or God, for the reason that he is incapable of community life," *κοινωνεῖν ἀδύνατος* (*Gorgias*, 507 E).

<sup>2</sup> *Aquinas Ethicus*, i. 309.



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prescribing religious rites, the other exhibiting a certain civil polity and social economy. There was never any obligation upon a Gentile to become a Jew. There was no valid aphorism in the ancient world, *extra Judaismum nulla salus*. Only when a Gentile chose to become a proselyte, was he bound by his own engagement to observe the ceremonial and judicial portions of the law of Moses. Christ at His coming repromulgated for the observance of all mankind the law of the Ten Commandments (cf. St. Matt. v., xix.) : He could do no otherwise. Acting through His Apostles, he gradually loosened the bonds of the ceremonial and judicial precepts of Judaism, and released all His followers from the observance of them. Instead, He laid down certain positive precepts of His own, by His own Divine authority, precepts of faith in the various truths that He revealed, and precepts of practice in regard of the Sacraments, especially the reception of Baptism and of the Holy Eucharist. Thus in the Catechism we find Divine Natural Law, the Commandments ; Divine Positive Law, the Sacraments ; and thirdly, in the Commandments of the Church, we have a specimen of the Canon Law, which is made by the Church. The Pope can dispense in precepts of the Canon Law ; not in points of the Divine Law, whether Natural or Positive.

Courts of law bring the law home to individuals. A law is for the community, like a cloud covering the heavens : a judicial sentence is a mantle for the shoulders of the individual. As befits a society perfect in the spiritual order, the Church has her own law,—the law of God, natural and positive, as also the Canon law ;—her schools of law, to wit, of Canon law and moral theology ; and finally, her courts of law. These courts are either external, like the secular courts, the *forum externum*, as it is called ; or internal, the *forum internum*, or court of conscience. The external court, so far as it touches laymen, is principally taken up with questions of the validity of marriage. The Bishop is the judge, and beyond him the case travels to Rome. The internal court of conscience is the confessional, “ the tribunal of penance,” as it is called, not

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metaphorically, but properly. What goes on there is a judicial procedure. As the Sacrament of Matrimony is a contract, the mutual contract of two baptized persons, so the Sacrament of Penance is a judgment. The contract is the Sacrament in the one case, and the judgment is the Sacrament in the other. The priest is the judge: the penitent is at once accuser and accused; and the absolution is the sentence. It is not enough for a man to be raised to the bench: he must be sent on circuit, or otherwise appointed to a particular court, ere he can sit as judge: he must be sent by ecclesiastical authority with jurisdiction to hear confessions. To the judge in this court, no power is given to condemn: the tribunal is one of reconciliation only, the penance assigned being part of the terms of reconciliation,—confession, sorrow, and purpose of amendment being the other terms. If the culprit will not come to terms,—*e.g.*, if, having married two wives at once, he will not give up the second, sentence of reconciliation is withheld, because he is unfit for it. There is nothing else to be done. He cannot be absolved, nor again can he be punished in this court by excommunication or any other punishment, as he might be in an external court. The priest who refuses absolution has no right to impose a penance.

In the Catholic Church, God's law is a reality. It is clearly laid down, and accurately enforced, the delinquent himself taking part in the enforcement. God has His own account with each particular soul. In that account, all excuses are weighed, all idiosyncrasies allowed for, all ignorances estimated, so far as they are ignorances, not carelessness or contempt. There is almost infinite complexity in the account of any one soul with its Creator: the wisdom of God alone can audit it: that is why we are forbidden to be judges condemnatory of one another, except on points of surface behaviour. The one competent Judge has issued his injunction, *judge not* (Matt. vii. 1), to stay rash sentences of condemnation. In the tribunal of penance man judges in place of God, but only to absolve.

## CONFERENCE XLIV : PROGRESSIVE MORALITY

THE Theory of Morals lays it down that the test of a good action is its being *wholesome* and *handsome* : that we have intuitions of the handsomeness, or beauty, of conduct, as we have other intuitions of the beauty of form and colour, of architecture, of literary style : that these intuitions need educating : that no education would avail but for the inner light of the mind flashing out to meet the instruction : that of this inner light some men have more, some less : that these intuitions are objectively valid, being the intuitions not of this mind or of that, but of all possible mind : that it is a futile objection against the validity of such intuitions to contend that they come of education and heredity, because whatever is necessary to make man man, however it comes (as if ears would only grow by diligent daily rubbing of a child's head), is to be accepted as natural, and right, and evidence of truth (and these intuitions in the spiritual order are as much part of man as ears in the animal) : lastly, that the comeliness and beauty of human conduct is a thing of reason, rational and according to the canons of reason, and therefore required by reason, and that not merely by the individual reason of the agent (as Kant seems at times to imply), but by an external Supreme Reason, which is God ; and thus morality, as being the dictate of the Living Reason of God, bears the force of law, and passes into the Moral Law.

Now I am about to raise certain difficulties. Morality is not for mere contemplation's sake, but for practice. It is not enough for conduct to be beautiful, if it be not also practicable. The Moral Law, like all other laws, must be somehow fulfillable by the community upon whom it is imposed. Aristotle says of gymnastic exercises : " The best training must befit the man endowed by nature with the finest physique : . . . nevertheless, if the trainer and

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gymnastic-master discovers some one who has no desire of a competent habit of body or competent athletic skill, it is still the trainer's business to secure to such a one such an amount of proficiency as he can be persuaded to go in for" (*Politics*, vi. 1288b). To a physical frame, not crippled by age and disease, but still below par, a course of gymnastics must be adapted short of the normal standard, being all the gymnastics that the person is capable of. There are, doubtless, individuals incapable of a perfect morality.<sup>1</sup> If any learned professor does not believe this, let him go and try his hand on missions, home or foreign. But I do not wish to speak of individuals : the individual, as such, is not the object of science : the variety of individuals is endless ; and moreover, law is not given formally to the individual, or to the household, but to the perfect and self-sufficient community. We are speaking of the Moral Law, as given to mankind, to communities and races and generations of men. Are there then whole communities incapable of a perfect morality ? Missionary experience seems to assure us that there are. In some of the South African missions, I believe, the attempt to convert the grown-up natives to the perfect morality of Christianity has proved a hopeless failure for the present : all that can be done is to get hold of the children deserted by their parents, or by them willingly bestowed upon the missionary, and form the new generation to Christian faith and morals in missionary camps, or "reductions." A great motive to St. Francis Xavier for going to Japan was that he despaired of doing the good that he wished in India. Thus he wrote to St. Ignatius :

The whole race of the Indians, so far as I have been able to see, is very barbarous ; and it does not like to listen to anything that is not agreeable to its own manners and customs, which, as I say, are barbarous. It troubles itself very little to learn anything about divine things, and things which concern salvation. Most of the Indians are of vicious disposition, and are adverse to virtue. Their instability, levity, and inconstancy of mind are incredible.

<sup>1</sup> I mean, perfect *absolutely*. Any person with the use of reason is capable of a morality *relatively* perfect, that is, of a certain measure of right conduct, as much as can be expected of *him*.



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. . . The natives are so enormously addicted to vice as to be little adapted to receive the Christian religion. They so dislike it that it is difficult to get them to hear us if we begin to preach about it, and they think it like death to be asked to become Christians (*Life and Letters* by Coleridge, Vol. II., pp. 67, 70).

And, a little previously, he had written to a missionary, encouraging him in the work of baptizing children :

For if you choose to look round you in mind, you will find that of all people in India, whether white or black, very few reach heaven except those who die before they are fourteen years old, and so depart this life with their baptismal innocence (*Ib.* ii., 63).

About reaching heaven, that is a large question, to which I have nothing to say here.<sup>1</sup> But of Hindoo morality, it may have been that God our Lord took a more indulgent view than His servant Francis Xavier, and saw that a people, circumstanced as the Hindoos had been for centuries, could not be expected to rise at once to the level of the Sermon on the Mount.

A law suffers no change by mere ignorance of its provisions on the part of those who are subject to it. The ignorance may be so strong as to be invincible, and excuse from all blame the breakers of the law : still the law is there, and they are materially and objectively, although not formally, lawbreakers. Of such ignorance I have nothing to say beyond remarking how common it is.<sup>2</sup> After years of thought, I have come to the conclusion that we must further admit some accidental material variation of the Moral Law, according to the variations of human society from less perfect to more perfect development. As Suarez puts it (*De Legibus*, lib. ii.), a law may be said to be changed when the "matter," or case which it was framed to meet, is changed. But the chief "matter"

<sup>1</sup> See Conference III.

<sup>2</sup> Thus the law against murder was faintly apprehended in the mind of a certain individual, an Irish gentleman of the sixteenth century, of whom B. Edmund Campion tells, in his *History of Ireland*. This gentleman went to confession to a monk, and the monk asked him if he were faultless in the sin of homicide. "He answered that he never wist the matter to be heinous before ; but being instructed thereof, he confessed to murder of five—the rest he left wounded, so as he knew not whether they lived or no" (quoted in Simpson's *Life of Campion*, p. 46, ed. 1896).

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of the Moral Law is human nature. And human nature does vary, not in its essentials, but accidentally. Therefore we may expect accidental variations of the Moral Law. General principles remain the same as that "parents are to be honoured," "sin must be punished," "promises should be kept,"—but applications vary. In primitive society some right principles of morality were insisted on, others did not appear,—whether through sheer ignorance, or as being really inapplicable at that stage, it is not easy to decide in particular cases. Thus the precept would hold and be recognised, "promises should be kept to friends": about promises to enemies nothing was said,—as a matter of fact, they were not kept. Or again, the precept "the memory of parents must be cherished," stood high in the estimation of barbaric or patriarchal society: but another precept, "the lives of defenceless enemies must be spared," found no recognition: nor was it completely recognised in the Middle Ages. I quote from an article of mine in *The Month* for last September, 1901:

Many things that such people (savages and barbarians) do may be quite right in them, though an identical conduct would be wrong in us. I do not merely mean that they know no better, and so are excused for their ignorance. I mean that, and something more than that. Things that do not befit us, are sometimes the best things available to the savage in his savage state, and are objectively right in him, inasmuch as they do so befit him. If he is converted to Christianity,—and he ought to be converted, when Christianity meets him in a form that he can appreciate,—then he is raised to a higher state, and those habits of an inferior being befit him no longer: they would be in him, if he continued them after his conversion, inappropriate, indecorous, and sinful. . . . I will permit myself one instance and one remark. It would never do in England, when a murder is committed, to punish the whole district until the offender is detected, and brought to justice: that would be to punish the innocent with the guilty, an unrighteous proceeding. But among the Kaffirs this system of vicarious responsibility, or the liability of the neighbourhood for crimes committed in it, is said to be the sole method for the prevention of crime: it suits that barbarian people, they expect it, and it is the right way of dealing with them. The remark that I have to make hereupon is that we have here the key, I think,

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to the perplexities of Old Testament morality. The men that we read of in the Old Testament were not savages, but they were what are called technically "barbarians," or men in the patriarchal stage of civilisation ; and God governed them and legislated for them according to the condition that they were in,—He made the best of His materials,—not as He governs us and legislates for us since the Sermon on the Mount. Patriarchal virtue is not Christian virtue, but falls short of it in many respects.

Hence one is apt to doubt whether even to all Christian communities the full moral law has been applicable. You cannot have Christian savages : the acceptance of Christianity raises men above the savage state,—or, if you like to put it so, men must be raised above the savage state ere they can accept Christianity. But you may have Christian barbarians, whole communities of such. At intervals between A.D. 500 and 1500, considerable portions of Christendom were in a semi-civilised or barbaric condition. Their institutions were barbaric accordingly, quite inadmissible at a normal level of human and Christian society, yet apparently suitable to those people for a time, and only removable by gradual improvement. I allude to the customs of trial by ordeal and by wager of battle, the treatment of prisoners, of debtors, of lunatics,—shall I add ? of schoolboys ; the condition of the fetid enclosures wherein such people were confined ; the neglect of the wounded in war ; much of the medieval system of punishment, and other practices, which were no cruelties to men of that rough age, though they would be cruelties now : perhaps I should add to the list, serfdom, or at any rate, slavery.<sup>1</sup>

Speaking as a Catholic to Catholics, I may assign as an instance of ignorance of law the position of a Protestant in "invincible ignorance" of the right and claim of Catholicism upon his allegiance. There is no imputation of intellectual incapacity in the term "invincible ignorance." It means simply that a person is beset with prejudices against the Catholic Church through which he

<sup>1</sup> To illustrate morality by medicine, I have heard a medical man say that the practitioners of the sixteenth century were not so very wrong in their use of bleeding, considering the constitutions that men then had.

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cannot see his way to join her, as neither perhaps should we have seen ours, had we been born and nurtured as he has been. A whole community, or *respublica*, of Protestants in invincible ignorance is not enough to make any material variation of that law of Christ which binds every man to be baptized, and every baptized man to be subject in spirituals to the Roman Pontiff. The law applies, but these persons do not see it, cannot see it just now, and so for the nonce are excused its observance, as I might be excused for eating meat on Holy Saturday, if I did not know it was an abstinence day. On the other hand, the Old Law, at least in its common interpretation among the Jews, might be called, in the words of Ezechiel xx. 25, *statutes that were not good*, and in the words of Hebrews viii. 6, 7, *a testament that was not faultless*,—in the frequent Hebrew sense of the negative *not*, *i.e.*, statutes that were *not so good*, a testament that was *not so faultless*, as the full moral law of the New Testament, afterwards to be promulgated by Christ.<sup>1</sup> Jewish morality varied from Christian morality, in some respects materially. The whole Jewish economy was imperfect, yet it was the best possible for the race and for the time, and as such was established by the positive intervention of the Most High.

I have to add, that to whatever extent we admit these material changes of the Moral Law in different ages and stages of humanity, still all such variation from a perfect type is in itself regrettable, the unlovely fittings of a not altogether lovely society; and as Israel longed for Messiah, so we should see with satisfaction these imperfect moral codes pass away into a *better testament and better promises* (Heb. viii. 6).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The text, Ezech. xx. 25, is celebrated, and the sense much disputed: see Suarez, *De Legibus*, lib. 9, c. 4, nn. 3 sq. St Matt. v. 17-48 should be studied in this connexion.

<sup>2</sup> See St. John Chrysostom and St. Thomas, quoted in the Appendix to my *Moral Philosophy*.



## CONFERENCE XLV : THE LAW AND GRACE

I HAVE two assertions to make about the Law, the Moral Law, I mean the Natural Law of God, the Law of the Ten Commandments. These two assertions are not derogatory to the Law, but argue its insufficiency and the need of something beyond. First, I assert that the Law cannot get itself kept : secondly, that if the Law could get itself kept, that mere observance would not avail for entry into heaven. We tell Socialists that their scheme of social democracy presupposes more virtue than can be expected of mankind, so much virtue indeed as, once secured, would render any departure from present arrangements unnecessary. They retort, that Socialism does not presuppose more virtue than does Christianity : but Christianity has proved tolerably practical, why not Socialism ? The reply is, that Christianity does not merely presuppose, but creates the virtue which it requires. They rejoin, that so would Socialism create virtue. That rejoinder I am not about to follow up : but, from what I have to say, you will see that it cannot be true anyhow of any godless form of Socialism. Christianity creates virtue by giving man grace to keep the moral law. Now I must tell you what Grace is, and I am speaking at present of Actual Grace. Actual Grace is some good thought or impression, “ borne in upon you,” as the Dissenters aptly say,—borne in upon your understanding and will, by the special providence of God, in consideration of the merits of Jesus Christ, to enable you to do good and resist evil. The articles of the Christian faith are the reservoir from whence these good thoughts flow,—articles about God, His majesty, His goodness, His power, His judgments ; articles about Jesus Christ and His redemption, the beauty and grace of His sacred Person, the Sacred Heart, Holy Communion, His Blessed Mother and the Saints ; articles about the Holy Ghost and the Church, the sanctity and

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dignity of every Christian man ; articles about the eternity of the world to come. Actual grace moves us to believe in these articles, it moves us to meditate upon them : and the more intensely we believe, and the more frequently we meditate, the greater abundance of further actual graces are we likely to find on occasions when we require them. *Habenti dabitur*, “to him that hath, shall be given” (Matt. xxv. 29): to him who has grace and answers to it, more graces shall come in. And without grace it is impossible to observe the Law to the satisfaction of the Legislator, or keep the Commandments as God would have them kept.

“Is it, then, only a Catholic, or only a Christian, who can keep the Commandments and lead a moral life? How about Socrates, and Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius, and endless worshipful gentlemen of our own age, who unfortunately are not Christians? Must they all be immoral men? What good thoughts in the form of actual graces can visit him who has no Creed to draw upon, nay, who has never heard of the Creed? You say, morality is impossible without grace, to which I add that grace, as you describe it, is an impossibility to many men : whence it follows that to many men morality is an impossibility : how shall God judge and condemn such men for not rendering their lives a presentation to the impossible?” —So might impatient interrogatories be multiplied. To all which I reply with this one answer, that the Church’s theology is for the children of the Church : it is *for* them as learners, and *about* them as subject matter : *homo* to the theologian is *homo Christianus et Catholicus* : about other men he has comparatively little to say : they are not in his province, they are beyond his purview, he deals with them only incidentally. He has only one function in their regard : to stand at the door of the sheepfold, and cry aloud to them to come in. He knows that all who hear his voice clearly, and refuse his invitation with wilful contumacy, shall be condemned :<sup>1</sup> he does not know precisely who hear and who are inculpably deaf. He is not let into the

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxii. 7 ; Mark xvi. 15, 16 ; John xii. 48.

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secret of God's dealings with the inculpably deaf, or the multitudes to whom the divine voice never penetrates. He can only conjecture with qualification and proviso, upon this hypothesis and upon that, starting from a few general principles, as the following, that God in His justice will never condemn any man for not rendering to His law an obedience which it was morally impossible for him to pay. The theologian does not know how far actual graces travel : they certainly do travel far beyond the visible fold of Christianity, else there could never be any converts. The theologian cannot in particular instances distinguish a movement of grace from a movement of mere natural goodness. The theologian instructs Catholics what they must believe and do, as they wish severally to save their own souls. For other men, he says to the Catholic, *Judge not* (Matt. vii. 1). God discerns excuses, as the telescope or sensitive plate discovers stars, where to the naked human eye none are visible. Every man must answer to God's truth and God's law, according to the degree of light in which that law and that truth are presented to his ken. Therefore we will leave our non-Catholic acquaintance, ancient and modern, to the judgment of the All-wise, Merciful, and Just ; and betake ourselves again to the consideration of the need of actual grace to enable you and me, Catholics, to keep the law of the Ten Commandments.

I say then, speaking generally, and without wishing to include extraordinary individuals, that we cannot keep the Law regularly and steadily, in the midst of temptations that are to us relatively grave, without the aid of actual grace. Yet our inability so to keep it of our natural strength and by aid of natural motives alone, is no excuse to us for violating the law, because the necessary actual graces are strewn about our path and lie at our doors. We can have actual graces by prayer, by meditation, by devotion to the Blessed Virgin by frequent and proper use of the Holy Eucharist, both as a Sacrament and as a Sacrifice. If a Catholic turns his back on all these aids, omits his customary prayers, says no rosary, comes late to

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Mass on Sundays, and never hears it on week-days by any chance short of a marriage or a funeral; if none of the Church's festivals is dear enough to induce him to confess his sins and receive Holy Communion,—who is to blame if he is overborne by temptation, and drifts passively in the swift undercurrent of secret sin? They tell a story of a man who languished in prison for years: one day he got up, tried the door of his prison, found it open, and walked out. Who was to blame for the sufferings of his captivity?

I take no account here of individuals, if such there be, to whose happily balanced or abnormally heavy natures no temptations are relatively grave.<sup>1</sup> Dealing with human conduct and concrete fact, the moralist ignores the dictum of formal logicians, that one contrary instance nullifies a universal conclusion. So it does in abstract science: but in moral matters the exception proves the rule. If I say that all men die, and you prove from such texts as 1 Cor. xv. 52; 2 Cor. v. 4; 1 Thess. iv. 17, that the just, found alive at the day of judgment, shall not die, I still unblushingly hold to it that all men die, because ordinary men in ordinary circumstances all do die. And so theologians hold to the universal proposition, that no one keeps the Law steadily in spite of severe temptation without the support of actual grace. To some men, not to any now in hearing, the passing the door of a public-house is a severe temptation. The decencies of our social position hedge us round: high education is a preservative against certain sins, and an incentive to sins of another kind: to no two men does temptation approach by exactly the same avenues. In temptation dangerous *to me*, relatively grave *to me*, the need of actual grace enters into my mental history. Then, if my religion does not keep me straight, nothing else will.

In Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* the Pilgrim is beguiled out of the way to Heaven by Mr. Worldly Wiseman, who wants to introduce him to one Mr. Legality, who with his son Civility dwells in the village of Morality. Morality

<sup>1</sup> About heavy natures, we must remember that there are temptations to omit as well as temptations to commit.



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Legality, and Civility, as John Bunyan quite recognised, are excellent things of themselves. The evil of them is when men try to extend them to what they are unfit for, and apply them to what they cannot do. They are unfit to effect the justification of the sinner and to ease him of his burden of sin : they cannot of themselves, and as it were in their own right, introduce any man into heaven, or promote him there. True, the works of a sinner in mortal sin are not necessarily sins, it is heresy to maintain that they are : they may be fraught with much natural goodness, yes and with supernatural goodness also, when they are done by the aid of actual grace : works of mercy to the poor, done under these conditions, are especially powerful in moving God to grant the doer of them the mercy which he himself needs : prayers also open the door to repentance : still the forgiveness of the sin, when it comes, comes gratuitously by the pure mercy of God, and is in no way merited by any *works of the law* : nor are any *works of the law* meritorious of further glory in heaven, unless the doer of them has had all his mortal sin forgiven, and is in what is called " the state of grace." That is the ground of my second assertion, that even though the Law could get itself kept without grace, such observance would not qualify for heaven. To be presented at Court, you must wear Court dress : to dine in hall in your own College, you must appear in Academical costume : so to enter heaven, to be welcomed and received by the King of Kings, to sit down at His eternal feast, you must be clothed in sanctifying grace, the *wedding-garment* or Court dress of the soul. Sanctifying grace, or the state of grace, you will observe, is something permanent : night and day it lasts, sleeping and waking, unless it be lost by mortal sin. We are not conscious of it, since it remains even in our states of unconsciousness : whereas actual grace visits us only when our mind is wide awake, only when we can choose our way and are responsible for our choice. We are not certain with the certainty of faith of possessing sanctifying grace, nor with certainty of immediate consciousness, as of our feelings of heat and cold : still we can infer

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that we have it with at least a very high probability. Actual grace is momentary, it comes and is gone again like a flash of lightning : sanctifying grace is continuous, as the electric light is normally permanent.

In the present order of Providence, the supernatural is the roof and crown of things, and without grace all nature is incomplete. I have nothing to say to arrangements that might have been and are not, the "state of pure nature," which theologians discuss. I have nothing to say of the possibilities open to men, millions of men though they be, who live without any visible means of spiritual subsistence. I speak of them to whom Christ is revealed, whom His grace solicits, who hear His voice, if they choose to listen to it. Such men, unless they will be led by grace, must fail even of being adequately moral men, adequately just and adequately pure. They will know the Law only to their own condemnation. They may observe it to a greater or less extent, but not perfectly, and not to salvation.

NOTE.—The whole argument of this Conference is Pauline. In Romans i., ii., iii., St Paul shows that neither the natural law, known to the Greek philosophers, and notably to the Stoics, who made much of it, nor the same law, revealed in Moses to the Jews, has been kept either by Jew or Gentile. *All have sinned, and do need the glory of God*, i.e. forgiveness by His grace (Rom. iii. 23). Romans vii. 7 seq., lays bare the wretchedness of the unbaptized man, who knows sin as he knows the law, but lives away from grace. His knowledge of the law serves only to turn his sin from *material* to *formal*, from evil done in ignorance to evil done in malice. Therefore the law is said to be *the strength of sin* (1 Cor. xv. 56); and *through law* men came to be *dead to law*; i.e. through knowledge of the law they come to be spiritually dead for having broken it (Gal. ii. 19).

## CONFERENCE XLVI : EVERLASTING DEATH

“**L**IFE everlasting ” is the last article of the Creed, declaring the goal of our progress. But, as Ecclesiasticus says, *all things are double* (Ecclus. xlii. 25) : to everything there is a reverse side. The reverse of life and light is death and darkness. In Holy Writ there is continual mention both of one and of the other, in the supernatural order. The one is very good, the other must in proportion be passing evil. Better progress, all the worse overthrow : it is the rule everywhere. The reverse of life everlasting is everlasting death, from which in the Litany we pray to be delivered, as from the culmination of all evil. *A morte perpetua, libera nos Domine*. Scripture tells us plainly in what the second, final, and everlasting death consists : *this is the second death, the lake of fire* (Apoc. xx. 14). It is the mission of the Church to lead men along the way that Christ has opened for them, the path of life everlasting to its consummation in heaven. It is equally the Church’s mission to guard men from everlasting death. The first precaution is to warn men of the reality of the danger, and to explain what everlasting death means. And this exposition must not be academical but practical : it must put the facts in such a way as to form the strongest possible deterrent against people exposing themselves to eternal perdition. That is why the New Testament, and the Church its faithful interpreter, ever insists principally upon the punishment of fire in hell. Every Christian dreads this fire. One need not be a very spiritually-minded person to dread hell fire. It is of faith that whoever dies in mortal sin, his soul goes down immediately into hell, there to be tormented for ever. It is of faith that this torment is of two sorts, “ the pain of loss ” (of God), and “ the pain of sense,” which pain of sense is principally that of fire. It is at least proximate to faith, that this fire

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is a true, proper, real fire, not anything figuratively so called.<sup>1</sup>

This is a fearful matter to think about. But we take a false view of hell, if we regard it as a mere scene of physical torment. The torment belongs not so much to the physical as to the moral order. Hell is not the dwelling of misery and misfortune, but of wilfulness and crime. Hell too, in a certain sense, is a place *where justice dwelleth* (2 Pet. iii. 13), that is, where they dwell who are being justly punished. Hell is for the wicked. Now the tormenting dread of hell is part of hell ; it is as it were some radiation of that fire reaching the earth : that tormenting dread then is for the wicked also, not for the just. Let them be terrified, scared, and amazed by the prospect of hell, who are rushing along the broad road that leads thither. Such terror is for them most salutary : it is the beginning of conversions. But for those whose feet are in the *narrow way that leadeth to life* (Matt. vii. 14), whose supreme desire, at least when their minds are in their normal and habitual state, is to please God and save their souls, the torturing fear of hell is not their portion on earth, God does not intend it for them. Not that even they can dispense with the fear of hell altogether : for their *charity* is not *perfect* (cf. 1 John iv. 18), and may fail : therefore the fear of hell should be down somewhere in the depths of their consciousness, to come up to the surface and operate as a deterrent in severe temptation, or as a motive of prompt repentance after a fall. It should also be brought to the surface at times by a good discourse on hell, lest it be lost beyond power of recovery in the hour of need.

The best fear of hell, a fear that will not alarm or harass, is the concomitant of a yearning desire to possess God in heaven : it is the apprehension of losing that on which our heart is strongly fixed. In a good man the desire of possessing God grows with his growth from boyhood through youth to manhood ; and it alone gathers strength, while

<sup>1</sup> By far the best exposition that I know of the authoritative teaching of the Catholic Church on the subject of hell in all its details is an article in the *Dublin Review* for January, 1881, "Eternal Punishment." A reprint of that valuable article would be a great boon.



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all else within him is falling to decay. The man who little knows God fears hell fire, if he fears anything supernatural. But the man who knows God and loves Him dreads the loss of God more than he dreads hell fire. It is profitable to such a soul in meditation to dwell more upon the pain of loss than upon the pain of sense. It should be the aim of the Christian preacher to lead his audience on to fear the former pain more than the latter. And to the actual sufferers, the pain of loss is worse than the pain of sense : that is because the sight of God is a much better good than hell fire is evil, and the lost know that it is so. Such is the constant tradition of the Church. We find it proclaimed in these words of St. Chrysostom, spoken in the great church at Antioch, some time between A.D. 386 and 398.

You would think that there was only one punishment, the burning fire ; look more closely, and you will see that there are two. Whoever is cast into that fire loses also the kingdom of heaven : the loss is a severer punishment than the fire. I know that many dread the fire only : but I say that the being cast out from such glory is a much more poignant pain than the fire of hell. No wonder if it is impossible for me to bring this home to you in words. We do not know the blessedness of the good things in heaven sufficiently to enable us to form any adequate idea of the misery of losing them. We shall know one day, when we come to have experience. But never be that our lot, Thou only-begotten Son of God !

Never may we have experience of that final woe of punishment ! An unbearable thing is hell, and the chastisement thereof. But though one tell of a thousand hells, he will utter nothing so dreadful as the being banished from that glory and happiness, as the being abhorred of Christ, as the reproach of not having nourished Him in His hunger. Better be struck with ten thousand thunderbolts, than see that mild Face turned away from us, and that gentle Eye not enduring to behold us. <sup>1</sup>

To the same effect St. Teresa :

I did not fear the torments of hell, which were as nothing in comparison when I considered that the damned must behold those eyes of our Lord, so amiable, so meek, so gracious, incensed against them ; this I think my heart could not endure (*Castle of the Soul*, Sixth Mansion, ch. ix.).

<sup>1</sup> Hom. 23 (al. 24) in Matt.

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Though then *the lake of fire* be *the second death*, it is rather the loss of God that formally deserves that name. The first death, which men die in this world, is the separation of the soul from the body : the second death, which men inflict upon themselves in this world, but which only becomes hopeless and everlasting in the world to come, is the separation of God from the soul. For God is the life of the soul, as the soul is the life of the body. I do not mean that God and the soul conspire into the unity of one person. But short of that, even in the natural order, there is a certain union between God and the soul, a certain play and the influence of the Divine Mind upon the human, without which all intellectual life would be impossible : and supernaturally the connection is much closer, the Holy Ghost dwelling in man as the principle of the supernatural life of grace. As the soul departs from the body when the body is no longer apt to hold it, or is no longer *in potentia ad vitam*, as the schoolmen speak : so God the Holy Ghost leaves the soul, leaves the whole man, that vilifies and defiles himself, soul and body, by mortal sin. Yet God does not so far depart from him as not still to hover over him, seeking a return by the man's repentance. The Jews had an idea that a departed soul hovered about its body till the fourth day, when decomposition set in (cf. John xi. 39). And among the illustrations of the *Oxford Bible* (Plate xxiv.), I see an Egyptian figure of the soul of Ani the Scribe (about B.C. 1400), in the form of a human-headed bird, hovering over the mummied body. So I say God hovers over the soul of a sinner, anxious to re-enter there by His grace. But a time comes at the end of life, when the last refusal of grace is made, and God leaves that soul unto death everlasting. Did any such conception flash through the mind of Homer, when he wrote that wonderful line, describing Hector in the last crisis of his fate (*Iliad* xxii. 213) ?

ᾤχετο δ' εἰς αἶδαο, λίπεν δέ ε' Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων.

Down to death his way he wended, and the radiant  
Sun-God left him.

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The body falls to dust, when the soul is gone from it ; so the total, final retirement of God from the soul involves the undoing of the whole man, soul and body, naturally and supernaturally. *Fear him that can destroy*, wreck and undo, *both body and soul in hell* (Matt. x. 28). " God is nearer to us," says Mother Julian of Norwich, " than our own soul : for He is the ground on which our soul stands." (Revelations, ch. 56). What must happen when that ground is taken away, not by such a withdrawal of God as would mean annihilation, but by a withdrawal of the loving care and kindness of God ? The whole being of the creature so abandoned must be in a state of disruption. It must be in the most unnatural state conceivable : for nothing is so natural, so germane to the soul as God. Now we know that all pain is simply some felt perversion of the order of nature within us. There can then be no worse pain than the felt loss of God. There are probably millions of souls from whom God withdraws Himself in the supernatural order, but not in the natural. I refer to infants who die without baptism. They are eternally unappreciative of the loss they have suffered of the beatific vision : thus there is room for natural happiness in them to have its way. But from Christians who have died in deadly sin, God withdraws Himself in every order and in every way, except in that of conservation of their being and chastisement of their offence. These are *the slain sleeping in the sepulchres, whom thou rememberest no more, and they are cast off from thy hand* (Psalm lxxxvii. 5). Cast off into the outer darkness, away from the light of Thy countenance and Thy love, away from election and adoption and sanctification and redemption, abandoned to torture and to devils, exposed without protection to everlasting fire, *vixerunt*, they have lived in vain. We do not know how far they may be severally conscious of their loss. But from the expression " unequal punishments," used by the Council of Florence, we may argue, what is otherwise *a priori* to be expected, that the consciousness of having lost God will be stronger in some souls than in others,—stronger very likely in those who have come nearer to God in his Church, and in

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this life have *tasted and seen that the Lord is sweet* (Psalm xxxiii. 9 : cf. Matt. xi. 22 ; Heb. x. 29).

We cannot consider this everlasting death without some speculation as to who incur it. Individual cases we cannot know : besides, science is not of individual cases, but of generalities. Generally then, the bad of all denominations incur everlasting death, bad Jews and bad Gentiles, bad Catholics and bad Protestants, bad Athenians of old and bad Romans of the present day.<sup>1</sup> I call him a bad man, who violates the dictates of his conscience, who shuts his eyes and goes on regardless of the measure of light that God vouchsafes to him. Thus he would be a bad Protestant, to whom God revealed the claims of the Catholic Church on the allegiance of all mankind, and who yet stood aloof from that Church. But I must further qualify this word "bad." I say then that, speaking generally, everlasting death is incurred by the malignantly and contumaciously bad. And I will illustrate what I mean by an example from the science of surgery, as it is now practised since the discovery by Lord Lister of what is called the "antiseptic treatment." The object is to exclude from the open surface of a wound the germs of putrefaction, which commonly are met with everywhere. Exclude them, and many a wound can be healed, though sufficient of itself to cause death without this care. Thus wounds of their own nature mortal fall into two classes, those from which putrefaction is kept away, and those where putrefaction is allowed to take its course. Of the former the patient is healed : of the latter he dies. So there are mortal sins of frailty and passion, and there are mortal sins of malice. Of the former the sinner would die everlastingly, if he remained in them : but he is cured by the antiseptic treatment of contrition and humility and confession. Thus his sin never comes to be of a malignant type. He has been unfaithful, he has forsaken God, but he has not gone the length of *fighting against God* (θεομαχεῖν, Acts v. 39). There are again mortal sins of malice, sins of the spirit rather than of the flesh, when a man hardens his

<sup>1</sup> Observe St. Paul's words, Rom. ii. 6-16.



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heart against God, wills no more to have Him for his God, or even denies Him or His revelation. A sinner of this type is proud, froward, impenitent. Every priest who has tried to bring erring souls to their duty knows this type of sinner, and how impossible it is to win him, while this malignancy lasts. Of some sin of this sort Our Lord says : *Whoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him* (Luke xii. 10). It shall not be forgiven him, because he will not stoop to seek forgiveness. This is the *sin unto death*, of which St. John writes, *Not concerning that do I say that any one should make request* (1 John v. 16). The sin is *unto death*, exactly so far as the sinner wills to remain haughty, obstinate, and impenitent. To repeat St. Chrysostom's words : " But never be that our state, Thou only-begotten Son of God."

## CONFERENCE XLVII : HEAVEN AND HELL AS ANTIDOTES TO WORLDLINESS

THE recurring solemnities of All Saints and All Souls point to two receptacles of the spirits of the departed. We look for a friend's soul in the second receptacle, if we find him not in the first. We look for him in purgatory, not seeing him yet in his place in heaven. There is still a third receptacle of souls of whom the Church can keep no commemoration, souls whom she knows not, souls who are outcasts from her communion and "lost." Ultimately there are but two receptacles for Christian souls to go to : they must go to heaven or to hell, to the one or to the other for eternity. We have to consider the bearing of this final alternative upon worldliness. What, then, is worldliness? Not a disposition to further to your utmost the temporal well-being of mankind. Lord Bacon's counsel to employ science to this effect was not in itself worldly counsel. Nor, again, is every wrong action a piece of worldliness. You do not call an undergraduate worldly, because he has for once lost control of himself and taken too much wine at a College supper. Worldliness is not a frailty, not an impulse, but a principle, adopted and cherished and acted upon of set purpose,—a certain systematic repudiation. It repudiates all thoughts of God and the world to come, counting them for no motives of human conduct, and allows of those motives only which are realisable in this world. Thus if an institution be at once a school and a religious house, worldliness may or may not praise the school, but it will reprobate the religious house. It admires a convent of monks for reclaiming waste land, but considers the time lost which they spend in chanting the Divine Office. Temperance in food the world regards with mild Aristotelian approval, but it stamps its foot at fasting, as an effete superstition, a dietetic error. Worldliness is the wisdom of "Mr. Worldly

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Wiseman ” :<sup>1</sup> it is *the spirit of this world, the wisdom of the flesh*, not *the mind of Christ* (1 Cor. ii. 12-15 ; Rom. viii. 5-18). In the limit, worldliness is identical with paganism, and is the direct contrary to Christianity. Christianity is *the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven* (Matt. iii. 2, xii. 28 ; John xiii. 5) ; a kingdom existing in this world imperfectly *in the midst of enemies* (Ps. cx. 2), *not of this world* (John xviii. 36) ; a kingdom that shall only be fully established in the great hereafter (Apoc. xi. 15). Jesus Christ Himself was the most unworldly of mankind in life and in teaching (John viii. 23, xvii. 14 ; Luke vi. 20-26). Being what he was, and coming whence He came, He could be no otherwise.

There are thousands of worldly Christians,—are we ourselves of the number ?—living inconsistencies, happy and unhappy in their inconsistency ; happy at least in this, that they do not push their worldliness to the limit, and after saying a thousand worldly things, they will yet silently creep to the feet of the Crucified.

Christianity means unworldliness, or, let us say it boldly, “ other-worldliness.” The very name of “ Christian ” itself was, to begin with, a nickname (Acts xi. 26 ; 1 Pet. iv. 16) given by the contented citizens of an earthly city to men who were *strangers and pilgrims in this world* (1 Pet. ii. 11). Christians then, as such, are “ other-worldly ” persons. But observe what this means. It does not mean what the Bishop of Stepney,<sup>2</sup> the other day, in imitation of the phrase “ Little Englanders,” called “ Little Christians,” *i.e.*, people who care only about their own soul, and move not a hand to help their neighbour either for this world or for the next. A “ Little Christian ” is a very poor Christian indeed. There are three great motives of Christianity, in an ascending series : fear of hell, hope of heaven, and love of God and Jesus Christ. All three should be operative in the Christian heart. Certainly the last and highest should not be the least operative. St. John

<sup>1</sup> *The Pilgrim's Progress* is eminently an unworldly book ; and in its unworldliness lies the secret of its charm and power. “ My dear children, the milk and honey is beyond this wilderness,” says John Bunyan.

<sup>2</sup> The present Bishop of London.

## HEAVEN AND HELL

Chrysostom (hom. 32 in 1 Cor.) says that, as it is proper to fire to burn, so it is proper to a Christian to love ; and the Evangelist St. John adds that the love of God cannot possibly dwell in him who closes his heart against his neighbour (1 John iii. 17). A "Little Christian," then, is a little monster. But it is not unworldliness or other-worldliness that will make "Little Christians" of us Catholics.<sup>1</sup> Fear and hope are stepping-stones to love.

No man can really believe in and have much before his mind the alternative of an everlasting beatific vision or everlasting fire, without there springing up in his heart a considerable growth of "other-worldliness." It is a curious study to observe the various ways in which the human mind has met this impressive alternative. One way is by flatly denying it. Another way is to believe in it and face it, and that either upon Catholic or upon primitive Protestant principles, as I will presently explain. A third way, the way generally taken in modern times, is to wrap the whole subject up in obscurity of thought and vagueness of language. The first way I need not dwell upon. Whoever takes it must take the risk, and the risk is this, that he sets his face against God, and arms all the being, and reality, and living anger of God against his own soul. The third way is scarcely less dangerous. It is not so defiant of God, yet it comes very near to mocking One who *is not to be mocked* (Gal. vi. 7). It is treating Him as we should never treat a power to be reckoned with in any earthly concern. You do not think to elude your creditors by keeping your books in disorder and having no clear idea of your liabilities. Catholics have looked the alternative steadily in the face, and have met it by the two securities which their Saviour has provided, namely, by Association and by Sacraments. Union is strength. Union is security even before God, when it is a union sanctioned by God. The Catholic trusts to be saved inasmuch as he is a member of that divine association called the Church. The cry of the Catholic heart of St. Teresa on her deathbed was,

<sup>1</sup> I can well understand a man becoming a "Little Christian" on the Antinomian doctrine of assurance of salvation, condemned in the Council of Trent.



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“ Lord, I am a member of thy Church.” In the later Judaism, when the thought of the world to come was more prominent than it had been, some Rabbi said that Abraham at the last day would stand by the gate of hell and prevent any member of the chosen people going in there. This, you say, argued excessive confidence in mere membership, apart from personal merits. No doubt it did. It was an abuse and perversion of a sound principle. The like abuse has obtained, I suppose, somehow and somewhere among Catholics. But it is an abuse that arouses in me no zeal. How many persons have you known, I will not say among the poor, in whom their religion is often part of their nationality, but among the educated classes, who set great store on belonging to the Church, and yet were not good Catholics ? With the modern bad Catholic commonly it goes for little that he is a Catholic at all.

God has not wished us to meet the peril of eternity as individuals, but as members of a Corporation, of which His Holy Spirit is the Living Charter, and of which His Divine Son is the Head ; a Corporation existing in two worlds, this present, and the world to come ; a Corporation of which the membership retained through death and after death means nothing less than eternal salvation.<sup>1</sup> Nor has He wished our justification, and sanctification, and salvation, to turn merely on our own good works, even when those good works are inspired by grace. To begin with, our first justification is always a pure bounty of God, unmerited by any good works going before or foreseen to come. God has willed this first justification to be operated in us ordinarily by a sacrament,—Baptism. He has willed justification lost to be restored by another sacrament,—Penance. The Catholic then trusts in Sacraments, as well as in Church-membership, to eke out the void of personal deserving, of which every right-minded man must be conscious when he considers his performances in the sight of his Maker. “ Lord, I am a member of Thy Church,” he says, “ and I have my pardon under Thy seal : now forgive me, then judge me according to my

<sup>1</sup> The lost, as I have said, cease in hell to be members of the Church.

## HEAVEN AND HELL

works, with this irrevocable act of pardon stamped upon them ; and assign my lot for eternity, *non æstimator meriti, sed veniæ largitor.*”

The primitive Protestant rejected Sacraments, and broke away from the unity of the Church. But he continued to believe in heaven and hell, two eternities. He stood before his Maker alone, covered by no Church, hallowed by no Sacrament. He was afraid of his works, as well he might be. Then he bethought him of making a private arrangement, for himself alone, with God. This arrangement he called, borrowing a Pauline phrase, “justification by faith.” He understood it thus : he felt converted, he believed himself forgiven, he had “found the Saviour,” he had assurance of his salvation ; and this very assurance, held firm in his heart, was henceforth his title to salvation. He continued to believe in hell,—for others ; but, for himself, he feared it no longer : he was one of the elect.

Modern thinkers,—that is, many of them,—have ceased to think at all distinctly on heaven and hell : they will not bluntly deny, they will leave all in the vague. They have no doctrine of Assurance, no Church, no Sacraments to fall back upon : they repose on the indefiniteness of their own thought.

You will not take anything I have said to mean that a Catholic so trusts to the Church and to the Sacraments as to be reckless of the Commandments. The Church and the Sacraments aid him to keep the Commandments, and recover him when he has broken them, that he may keep them better in future. To assist his observance, the Church presses upon him two motives, not sole motives, not highest of motives, but strong and much needed motives,—heaven and hell, prime objects of hope and fear.

The fear of hell troubles *the peace of sinners* (Ps. lxxiii. 3). Sinners must be troubled before they can be converted. It prevents a man from lying down in the lap of deadly sin, and tranquilly acquiescing in that position, as a worldly-minded person is apt to do. The prodigal never thought of returning till famine and uneasiness overtook him in

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the far-off country. A good fright, or a gnawing fear, is the first symptom of recovery from sin. All preachers of Lent missions know that it is the sermon on hell that usually brings the sinner back to his duty and to Christ.

## CONFERENCE XLVIII : THE SANCTION OF REWARD

THE sanction of a law being either reward for keeping it or punishment for breaking it, I propose to speak of the sanction of reward for the observance of the moral law by a good Christian man. I need not tell you that that reward is heaven. Our Lord puts heaven before us as a motive of conduct : *Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven* (Matt. vi. 20). On the other hand, the doctrine has vogue in our time that morality is essentially disinterested ; that any self-regarding action, such as eating one's dinner, or working for hire, or promotion, or reputation, or other reward, though not a wicked thing to do, yet is not a virtuous thing either : it is at best extra-moral conduct. I should say myself that any right and reasonable action, consciously done, is so far forth a moral and virtuous action. If any one will maintain the contrary doctrine, and place all moral goodness in disinterested benevolence, I ask him what good thing this benevolent man wishes to his neighbour. Does he desire his neighbour also to be benevolent ? Not merely that, I imagine. He wishes his neighbour the enjoyment of what are commonly reputed to be the good things of life,—as health, children, a competency, learning. It seems singular that it should be morally virtuous to desire these things for your neighbour, and not morally virtuous in any way to desire them for yourself. However, I will let this theory alone as applied to the good things of earth. The only man I would quarrel with is he who calls the motive of heavenly reward a sordid motive, who thinks it selfishness to have an eye to treasures in heaven, who would have us do good for goodness' sake alone, and shut our eyes to the prospect of an *eternal weight of glory* (2 Cor. iv. 17).

First, I observe that this is requiring men to be more detached from heaven than they are from earth. No one



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would advise a workman to cease to make his pay any motive to his labour,—no one would tell a young barrister or a young doctor to put fees out of consideration, and have no wish to attract notice and rise in his profession. If I may work for money and promotion, why may I not work for heaven? Why may not a Christian, like many other professional man, work for that reward which is proper to his profession? Secondly, I observe that, whereas a reward is either extrinsic or intrinsic to the work done, and the latter is the nobler sort of reward, the reward of heaven is of this nobler sort, being something intrinsic and proper to the good works of a child of God in grace, not extrinsic and adventitious. Let me explain myself. An *extrinsic* reward has no natural connexion with the work done, but is arbitrarily added to it, as when we load a boy's stomach with sweets in reward for his having burdened his memory with the conjugations of Greek verbs. What have the verbs in *μ* to do with fruit and pastry? Wages, salaries, fees, are extrinsic rewards, sometimes given for work done, without any love of the work itself, as when we pay 25s. a week to a scavenger. Some false religions, and some false presentations of true religions, have made of heaven a reward extrinsic to virtue, not its connatural outcome and result; in other words, not *intrinsic* to it, as health and strength are the intrinsic reward of outdoor exercise. Plato mentions certain authors, "whose story takes men down to the under-world, reclines them at tables, and arranges a drinking-bout of just souls wearing crowns, spending all time to come in drinking, as though they thought that the fairest guerdon of virtue was everlasting intoxication."<sup>1</sup> I have heard heaven described as being placed in the centre of a dumpling of infinite radius, and eating your way out: this I suppose was the joke of some mathematical gourmand. Any one who censures the motive which heaven supplies, should be called upon to explain his conception of heaven: it will surely prove to be something gross and inadequate. What, then, is heaven to a Christian? Simply, the vision

<sup>1</sup> κάλλιστον ἀρετῆς μισθὸν μέθην αἰώνιον. *Republic*, II., 363 C, D.

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of God. Now good works, into which faith, hope, and charity enter, prepare the soul for God, give it a sort of affinity with God,—I may say, clarify it to behold God. We walk by faith in the unseen, and are rewarded by vision.

So it is, either heaven is misconceived by those who deprecate the thought of heaven ; or it is despaired of,—of that I shall say a word presently ; or the way in which the motive of heavenly reward works is misrepresented. It is supposed, for instance, that if I visit a sick person in the Infirmary, hoping that God will give me the reward which He has promised even for a cup of cold water (Matt. x. 42), I elicit some internal act of this sort : “ For this poor patient personally I care not twopence, but I will use him as a stepping-stone, myself to ascend to a better place in heaven.” That is, I am supposed to eliminate charity in order to exercise hope, which is preposterous. Good motives are not mutually exclusive. Natural good motives, as those of honour, courtesy, patriotism, are not inconsistent with supernatural ; and the three supernatural motives, fear of God, hope in Him, and love of Him, go well together. As I love God, I hope to possess Him, which is the desire of heaven ; and as I hope to possess Him, I fear to lose Him, which is the fear of hell. This fear, this hope, and this love are the steps of a Jacob’s ladder, by which men, future companions of angels, ascend and descend. Or again, we may say, there ought to be a wide key-board of motives, from bass to treble, playing upon the human soul for good, from natural prudence to the purest love of God. Men are not always ready to respond to the highest motives : the noblest aspirations are not always available in the struggle and mood of the moment. A laugh will often parry a thrust of the Evil One better than an argument or a pious groan.

A strange benevolence it is, which bids men cherish no hope for the future, that future which lies very near us all in the world beyond the grave. A belief in the ultimate triumph of good, a glimpse of the anticipated glory of the Resurrection shining in a halo of soft light around the

## THE SANCTION OF REWARD

Cross, this is our encouragement to be what it is so hard to be, to do what it is so hard to do, to suffer what it is hard to suffer, to be good and to do good and to suffer evil. This shakes off sloth, and extinguishes sensuality, and scatters covetousness, three great enemies of active benevolence. This cures misanthropy. The misanthropist is neither happy himself, not likely to spread happiness around him. I am thinking of that great poet, the ornament of Cambridge some eighty years ago, who I believe has left his name to one of the pools of the Cam, a fair life and a splendid genius all blighted by misanthropy. Had heaven been more of a motive to him, he could never had penned such lines as the following :

Each lucid interval of thought  
Reveals the flaws of nature's charter ;  
And he that lives as wise men ought  
But lives as saints have died, a martyr.

It is precisely heaven, and Christianity leading to heaven, that corrects " the flaws of nature's charter."

A chronic and recurring danger to faith is gloominess and an unchecked sense of the preponderance of evil. We believe when we are bright and lightsome. While we look up to heaven and feel that our home and inheritance is there, we are deaf to argument against faith. Only by faith have we the promise of heaven, and we will not resign our portion. " I looked forward to Thy salvation, O Lord " ; and meanwhile " I loved " the means thereto, " thy commandments " and Thy revealed teaching. *Expectabam salutare tuum, Domine, et mandata tua dilexi* (Ps. 118).

## CONFERENCE XLIX : FINAL REALISATION

**E***YE hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for them that love him* (Isaias lxiv. 4, quoted 1 Cor. ii. 9). This is not said of the place of punishment, nor is there any authority for applying it to that place. Probably we have a pretty accurate notion of what hell is, surely no place to go to. Nor can we say that it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive what would be enough to make man, in a natural way, perfectly happy. See whether this sketch be not fairly adequate. We shall have to put the happiness after death, or else it will not be perpetual ; for the body, as we know it, must decay. Naturally, I think, we should part with the body and be done with it for ever. It is a moot point, but no probability of resurrection in the natural order has ever come home to my understanding. The soul, the everlasting element in man, secures the two components of happiness, interest and love. There is interest enough in creation, if our soul may be permitted to roam about and pry into all the secrets of the physical universe, to search and discover everywhere, with a deathless energy, never flagging under the labour. There is love in the company of other souls. Happiness is necessarily a social happiness : we shall never be happy in solitude and isolation : of that we may rest assured, whatever happiness we attain to. Given immortality, unfailing energy, abundant occupation and interest, loving companionship of friends,—add to these gifts perpetual security against pain and sorrow,—add above all the consciousness of being in favour with God, and the glorious worship of Him, our Lord and Benefactor, as knowable under the veil of creation,—and it is hard to say what shall be wanting to the natural measure of our happiness. It would be strange indeed if our rational souls, whose end is happiness, were



## FINAL REALISATION

incapable of conceiving what was requisite to make them happy.

All these elements of good are present in the final consummation of the supernatural order, in the Christian heaven ; but they are present after a mode and manner of excellence utterly beyond our imagination and comprehension. The happiness of heaven is not merely human, but divine : it is at once divine and human, as the Blessed are made in the likeness of *the Son of Man, standing at the right hand of God* (Acts vii. 56). I call it a divine happiness : so St. Thomas Aquinas says, “ they enjoy the same happiness wherewith God Himself is happy ” (*Contra gent.* iii. 51). How that can be, we will consider presently. Meanwhile, as God is incomprehensible, so is His happiness : so too is the happiness of the Blessed who share therein. Imagine every horror you can, and call that hell, and you may easily overrun the bounds of a sound and safe theology : but when you want to picture heaven, give the reins to your imagination, you can never come near the reality : the reality is all that and endless more ; only see you never imagine aught but what is good and holy and pure. Whatever good you can think of will be there, as divines say, “ eminently and in a better way,” as the circuit of a real citadel excels the sand fortresses of children on the seashore. The delights of heaven transcend the horrors of hell : in fact the poignant agony of hell is precisely the thought of the eternal forfeiture of heaven through one’s own fault. The serpent lied when he said, *ye shall be as gods* (Gen. iii. 5) ; but *faithful and true* are the *sayings* of Our Saviour, who has vanquished *the old serpent*, and makes us the same promise (Apoc. iii. 21 ; xii. 9 ; xxii. 6).

I call it a “ human happiness,” because it includes all the elements of natural happiness, and further, because it beatifies the whole man, body and soul. You are aware that a disembodied spirit, however happy, is not a man : St. Peter, St. Andrew, St. John, are men no more. The body is an essential component of human nature. The resurrection of the body is one of the promises of Christ. We owe it to the merits of Christ that our bodies are to

## FINAL REALISATION

rise in glory. I cannot tell you what a glorified body will be like : I can only refer to the accounts of the Body of Christ after His resurrection, and say that our glorified bodies will be like that (Phil. iii. 21 ; cf. Matt. xiii. 43 ; xvii. 2 ; Luke xx. 36). We have moments of exuberant health, in which we feel what a glorious thing perfect human nature is, if only it could be kept at its best. There are some strange lines in a choral ode of Euripides (*Hercules Furens*, 637) : “ If gods had discernment and wisdom after the notion of men, there would be a second youth given as a prize, a clear mark of virtue, for those who had spent their first youth well.” This is exactly what we are promised in the resurrection. We do not make enough of the resurrection of the body. The thought is a grand incentive to the virtue we most need,—a peculiar flower of the Incarnation. I venture to say to you : “ Take care of the body, and the soul will take care of itself.” You understand, I speak in no epicurean sense : I mean, govern the body, sanctify it, according to the law and with the grace of Christ, conform to it His sacred Flesh, and you will save both soul and body.

I have heard of a good Catholic mother repeating on her death-bed, “ I want to go and see God.” That I call “ a divine happiness.” St. Thomas calls it “ the happiness wherewith God himself is happy,” to see God. I quote the whole passage to which I referred before : it illustrates such sayings as *then face to face* (1 Cor. xiii. 12) : *we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is* (1 John iii. 2). St. Thomas then writes :

We shall see God face to face, because we shall have an immediate vision of Him, as of a man whom we see face to face. By this vision we are most of all made like to God, and are partakers in His happiness, for this is His happiness, that He understands Himself. They therefore *eat and drink at the table* of God (Luke xxii. 30), who enjoy the same happiness wherewith God is happy, seeing Him in the way in which He sees Himself (*Contra gent.* iii. 51).

Only he into whose heart it has entered to conceive what God is, can conceive what the sight of God is. Shows and sights draw men in crowds. Through the eyes we

## FINAL REALISATION

admire, through the eyes we love ; and as we love, we still desire to see. There are as many loves as there are sights : there is the sight of the eye, most precious of all our senses, and the sight of the understanding, more precious still. Man's happiness is in some vision of the understanding. Vision awakens love ; and love awakened, as I have said, cries for vision. *Domine, ut videam.* To say that God is more admirable, more lovely, more beautiful, better than all creation, is poor praise. But that is enough to give us an inkling of what the sight of God must be. We are familiar from childhood with the phrase " to see God." Perhaps it has never come home to us, how much that simple phrase, taken in its literal and proper meaning, signifies. To be *invisible* is one of the grand attributes of Deity, not as an angel, or the object of an abstract idea, is invisible to the bodily eye, but to be invisible to the highest angel by any exertion of mere angelic faculties. Only God of His own nature is capable of seeing God. God could not create a creature exalted enough to have a natural capacity for seeing Him. As theologians put it : *videre Deum est supra capacitatem naturalem omnis creaturæ creabilis.* The gratuitous gift of sanctifying grace, God's best gift to any mere creature, that gift alone qualifies angel or saint to see God. Such was the gift poured out on Mary in the first instant of her human existence, according to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception : thanks to that gift, and the augmentation of it throughout her life, she sees her Divine Son in the glory of His Godhead now. The same is the gift bestowed on us in Baptism, and in all the Sacraments.

There is not one heaven for the Blessed Virgin and the Apostles, and another for us. We are to have the entry and the free range of our one Father's house. It is the home of the canonised Saints, and also our home. We are to enjoy all the rights of sons there. Other sons will be better and dearer, and see their Father with a clearer vision ; but we shall look upon the same face and be caught up in the same fatherly arms. *Gloria hæc est omnibus sanctis ejus.*

There must be some proportion between the means of

## FINAL REALISATION

salvation and the end and consummation of salvation : a mighty end needs to be worked out by mighty means. Therefore are the Sacraments wonderful, and most of all the Blessed Sacrament : they have to do a great work in raising mortals like ourselves to the society of the Holy Trinity and to the foot of God's throne. No wonder if terms of access seem high, no wonder if grace exacts fidelity, no wonder if faith transcends imagination. No wonder if the Church of God on earth carries a burden of high mysteries, of grave responsibilities, and imperious claims. A petty, foot-rule-measured religion can never be the code of the kingdom of heaven.

Two thoughts have arisen in my mind in treating of this high subject. I put them as difficulties. I imagine one of you saying : " No doubt, heaven is a grand place ; but I would willingly forego some of its final grandeur if the road thither were made smoother, wider, more frequented, and less dark. At present we are told it is a *narrow way*, and *few there are that find it* (Matt. vii. 14) ; and it is lit only by the lamp of faith, *as of a light shining in a dark place* " (2 Pet. i. 19). This is one difficulty. Then some one else chimes in : " The difficulty just stated is mine also, and furthermore, I am dissatisfied with the view of heaven ; I do not want profound peace and entire rest ; I can never be happy without some conflict, struggle, and active exertion."

Let us give the priority to the second difficulty. As I have said, many good things will be found in heaven " eminently and in a more excellent way," not formally and precisely as they are on earth, because that would involve some undesirable concomitant. With this reserve, I say that there certainly shall be a struggle and active exertion in heaven. That is involved in the essential idea of heaven, which is seeing God. We read in Genesis, xxxii. 24, sq. how Jacob wrestled with an angel, representing God. To see God is spiritually to wrestle with God, inasmuch as all the energy and activity of the soul is called out by that sight, and spent upon God, against whom it can never prevail, because God is infinite, and



## FINAL REALISATION

therefore, how clearly soever we see Him, we can never comprehend or exhaust Him. The sight of God then is a never-ending activity, and at the same time a rest and a repose, because it satisfies us, because it never cloy or wearies us, and because we have no mind ever to turn away from Him.

On the *narrow way*, all that I can say now is that God is our Father and our Lord. As Father, He has magnificent designs for our establishment in life everlasting, in a position of dignity befitting sons of His. Those designs can only be worked out by a series of costly efforts on our part. It would be foolish of us to spoil any part of that magnificence by cowardice about the way leading thereto. Yet this is what we actually are doing by our cowardice in Christian life, and our falling short of the graces given to us, each in his own place in the Church. In our childish days we resented being sent to school, and being made to work when we got there. We were willing enough to forego the advantages of a liberal education. But our parents and teachers knew our true interest better, and insisted on making men of us in spite of ourselves. Our Father in heaven insists on making us Saints, uncanonised probably and uncanonisable, but still Saints ; there are none in heaven who are not of the number of *All Saints*.

God is also our Lord. He has created us for His praise and glory, to be worked out according to His own masterful will, to which as creatures we are bound to submit. That glory has two parts : part the first, our “labours, agony and passion, cross and dereliction, faintness and weariness, death and burial” ; part the second, our “resurrection, ascension, joys, glory.” You see I take the words from the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus. These two parts together made up the portion of God’s Divine Son made man. The second part is a multiple of the first ; it is multiplied ten thousand fold ; still to diminish the one would be proportionally to diminish the other. We must give glory to God our Lord according to the full measure that He has appointed, both of our temporal labours and of our eternal happiness.

## CONFERENCE L : A PROCESSION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

“OUT of sight, out of mind,” the proverb says. Therefore our Saviour, being about to leave this earth and withdraw His natural presence from among mankind, *made a memorial of his wonderful works* (Ps. cx. 4), even Himself, concealed beneath sacramental veils. In the Blessed Sacrament Jesus is still the Holy Child of Christmas, still the Crucified in daily Mass, still the Way and the Life, still the Wonder-worker, still the Lord from heaven,—all these things at once. The Blessed Sacrament brings the gospel history back again on other feasts of the year; but during Corpus Christi Octave especially It brings heaven upon earth. It blends itself with the body and being of man, and through man with all earthly objects and events, so far as they are of God, sanctifying them, glorifying them, and evolving from them a goodness that shall endure for ever. Therefore, wherever we are able at this time, we carry the Blessed Sacrament in procession, not within the walls of the church, but out in the fields, under the summer sky, among trees and flowers, through the squares and streets and the haunts of our daily life. Jesus is, as St. Ignatius styles Him, our “Eternal King and Universal Lord.” His is true Catholic Majesty : we wish Him therefore in these days to penetrate everywhere and to take possession of all we have. We carry Him to see all our treasures, we spread them before Him, for they are His, and ours only to use with His permission ; all our places of delight, for we would taste no delight that cannot meet His approving eye and be consecrated by His benediction.

A Procession, yes, and a Progress, a Royal Progress of our King. And a Spiritual Progress in our hearts by way of accompaniment,—an advance and an increase in reverence, love, and frequentation of this Adorable Mystery.

## A PROCESSION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

As I am parting I say to each of you : Ever remember this: all your life long, your conduct in regard of the Blessed Sacrament will be the test of your quality as a Catholic, and the measure of your hopes of salvation.





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